

January 2015

CLASSROOM DISCOURSE OF  
ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNERS' WRITING INSTRUCTION IN A  
MIDWESTERN SCHOOL

MARSHALL D. KLASSEN

*Purdue University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/open\\_access\\_dissertations](https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/open_access_dissertations)

---

**Recommended Citation**

KLASSEN, MARSHALL D., "CLASSROOM DISCOURSE OF ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' WRITING INSTRUCTION IN A MIDWESTERN SCHOOL" (2015). *Open Access Dissertations*. 1417.  
[https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/open\\_access\\_dissertations/1417](https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/open_access_dissertations/1417)

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
Thesis/Dissertation Acceptance**

This is to certify that the thesis/dissertation prepared

By Marshall Drolet Klassen

Entitled

Classroom Discourse of Elementary English Language Learners' Writing Instruction in a Midwestern School

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Is approved by the final examining committee:

Trish Morita-Mullaney

Co-chair

Tony Silva

Luciana C. de Oliveira

Co-chair

Judith T. Lysaker

Margie Berns

To the best of my knowledge and as understood by the student in the Thesis/Dissertation Agreement, Publication Delay, and Certification Disclaimer (Graduate School Form 32), this thesis/dissertation adheres to the provisions of Purdue University's "Policy of Integrity in Research" and the use of copyright material.

Approved by Major Professor(s): Trish Morita-Mullaney

Approved by: Phillip VanFossen

Head of the Departmental Graduate Program

11/17/2015

Date

CLASSROOM DISCOURSE OF ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' WRITING  
INSTRUCTION IN A MIDWESTERN SCHOOL

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Purdue University

by

Marshall Drolet Klassen

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

of

Doctor of Philosophy

December 2015

Purdue University

West Lafayette, Indiana

For Heejung.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my co-chairs, Dr. Luciana C. de Oliveira and Dr. Trish Morita-Mullaney, as well as my committee members, Dr. Judith Lysaker, Dr. Tony Silva and Dr. Margie Berns for their support, insight and guidance throughout my research and academic career. I also wish to thank Dr. Wayne E. Wright for his unwavering support and advice throughout my research. I want to especially thank Dr. Trish Morita-Mullaney for her guidance during the preliminary stages of my research, in particular in helping to find research sites and find focus in my research. Furthermore, I want to thank Dr. Luciana C. de Oliveira for involving me in her research from the beginning of my studies at Purdue, and for fostering my interest in Systemic Functional Linguistics and its applications for text analysis, curriculum development, and teaching pedagogy in Education. I also must credit in no small part the time and mentoring given to me by my SFL mentors, Michael Maune and Josh Iddings, who many times guided me through the intricacies of this framework and its underlying philosophy.

I would also like to help my fellow graduate students, colleagues and supporters for their support and above all, friendship during this time. I owe each of you my thanks: Michael Maune, Josh Iddings, Ben Boche, Alsu Gilmetdinova, Reiko Akiyama, Yumiko

Tashiro, Dennis Koyama, Scott Partridge, Ileana Cortes Santiago, Deedra Arvin, Bonnie Nowakowski, Josh De Lon, and Genevieve Aglazor.

I would also like to thank my family, Bill and Kay, my brother, Sean, my in-laws, Jinhak and Eunja, my brother-in-law, Heesung, and my friends Bryan, Todd, and Frank for their constant support and keeping me in good spirits throughout my research. Most of all, I would like to thank my wife, Heejung, for her support, patience, wisdom, insight and inspiration throughout my research, my studies, and my life. Without the support of all of these people, I would not have been able to complete this long journey, and I am grateful and lucky to have had each one of you in my life.

Finally I would like to thank my participants for their patience and their willingness to welcome me into their school and classrooms, gave me so much of their time, and allowed me to complete my research.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Purpose of this Study.....	6
1.4 Research Questions .....	9
1.5 Summary.....	11
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	13
2.1 Language, Discourse, Classroom Discourse, Writing Discourse.....	14
2.1.1 Differences in Spoken and Written Language .....	18
2.2 Elementary Writing Instruction in the United States.....	20
2.2.1 History of Process Movement .....	20
2.2.2 Process Writing: Instructional Approaches and Activities.....	22
2.2.3 Writing Skills for Elementary English Language Learners.....	25
2.3 English Language Learners and Writing .....	26
2.3.1 Writing and the use of the Primary Language with English Language Learners .....	28
2.3.2 In/Exclusion of ELL Writers in Process Writing Literature .....	30
2.4 Systemic Functional Linguistics Genre Based Pedagogy .....	31
2.4.1 Teacher Discourse & Genre-based Pedagogy.....	32
2.4.2 Explicit Instruction with Genre Based Pedagogy .....	35
2.5 Theoretical Framework .....	37
2.5.1 Genre.....	40
2.5.2 Register .....	41
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY .....	43
3.1 Research Design.....	43
3.1.1 Multiple Case Study .....	44
3.1.2 Rationale for Case Study.....	45
3.1.3 Reliability and Validity of Case Study.....	46
3.1.4 Context, Participants and Research Site.....	47
3.2 Context of the Study.....	48
3.2.1 Local Demographics .....	48
3.2.2 Participants .....	50

	Page
3.3	Data Sources and Procedures..... 51
3.3.1	Classroom Observations, Field Notes and Memos..... 51
3.3.2	Interviews with Teachers..... 53
3.3.3	Memos, Photographs, School Documents..... 54
3.4	Data Procedures ..... 54
3.4.1	Data Analysis..... 54
3.4.2	Phase 1 – Inductive Analysis: Teacher Interviews, Classroom Observations, Written Text and Written Artifacts..... 55
3.4.3	Phase 2 – Curriculum Genres & Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis... 56
	Curriculum Genres as Analysis. .... 58
3.5	Limitations ..... 68
3.6	Conclusion ..... 70
CHAPTER 4.	EMERGENT THEMES IN CLASSROOM DISCOURSE ..... 71
4.1	Introduction..... 71
4.2	Outside Influences on the Classroom..... 73
4.2.1	Writing Assessments..... 73
4.2.2	Teacher Ideologies ..... 91
4.2.3	Repeating Themes of Language Use..... 111
4.3	Conclusion ..... 115
CHAPTER 5.	SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC CLASSROOM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS 118
5.1	Curriculum Genre & Stages: Tasks of Language..... 119
5.2	Stages: Task Orientation, Negotiation, Deconstruction, Specification ..... 120
5.3	Metafunctions: Functions of Language ..... 124
5.3.1	Textual Metafunction ..... 125
5.3.2	Interpersonal Metafunction ..... 127
5.3.3	Ideational Metafunction ..... 130
5.4	Importance of Discourse Analysis for English Language Learners ..... 132
5.5	Third Grade Teacher Language Analysis..... 134
5.5.1	Task Orientation 1..... 134
5.5.2	Task Specification 1..... 140
5.5.3	Task Negotiation 1 ..... 145
5.5.4	Task Deconstruction 1..... 151
5.5.5	Task Negotiation 2 & Task Deconstruction 2..... 156
5.5.6	Task Specification 2..... 163
5.6	Third Grade Teacher Analysis..... 169
5.6.1	Textual Metafunction Analysis. .... 169
5.6.2	Interpersonal Metafunction Analysis ..... 171
5.6.3	Ideational Metafunction Analysis..... 172
5.7	Fifth Grade Analysis ..... 173
5.7.1	Task Orientation 1..... 173
5.7.2	Task Specification 1..... 177



	Page
5.7.3 Task Orientation 2.....	184
5.7.4 Task Negotiation 2 .....	188
5.7.5 Task Specification 2.....	192
5.7.6 Task Negotiation 3 .....	197
5.7.7 Task Specification 3.....	202
5.8 Fifth Grade Teacher Analysis.....	209
5.8.1 Textual Metafunction Analysis .....	209
5.8.2 Interpersonal Metafunction Analysis.....	211
5.8.3 Ideational Metafunction Analysis .....	212
5.9 Conclusion .....	213
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	215
6.1 Introduction.....	215
6.2 Discussion of Findings.....	215
6.2.1 Agency in Writing for English Language Learners.....	215
6.2.2 Writing Becomes More Complex, but Teachers are Providing Less Support.....	216
6.2.3 Writing Process and Six Traits.....	218
6.2.4 The State of Writing in the Classroom.....	220
6.2.5 Use of L1 and Cultural Backgrounds in Discourse and Supporting Students.....	220
6.3 Implications for Practice.....	221
6.3.1 Metalanguage.....	223
6.3.2 Organization and Clarity.....	224
6.3.3 Importance of Multi-Modal Teaching.....	226
6.3.4 Realizing the Different Needs of ELLs .....	226
6.4 Areas of Further Research .....	228
6.5 Conclusion .....	229
REFERENCES .....	231
VITA.....	241

## ABSTRACT

Klassen, Marshall D. Ph.D., Purdue University, December 2015. Classroom Discourse of Elementary English Language Learners' Writing Instruction in a Midwestern School. Major Professor: Trish Morita-Mullaney.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the discourse of English Language Learners' writing instruction in a third and fifth grade classroom. Indiana has experienced great growth in the population of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the past ten years, with this school district sharing a similar trend with an increase of the number of ELLs in this schools' population. This research took place in two classrooms with a high percentage of ELLs, utilizing a case study approach with teachers' classroom discourse being analyzed through both a qualitative analysis and a Systemic Functional Linguistics discourse analysis. The findings of this research suggest that there are a number of factors that influence the discourse of writing for ELLs, including teacher ideologies, outside assessments and that these directly affect how instruction is implemented. The discourse analysis points out problematic patterns of discourse, and potential difficulties in understanding for ELLs. Several implications are suggested, including alternate approaches to writing that implement elements of language highlighted in the discourse analysis, and implications for future teacher preparation.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The English Language Learners (ELLs) community is growing across the United States, and the increase has brought many changes in approaches to education. Indiana has experienced this growth keenly, having seen a 408% rate of growth of ELLs over the past decade, with these changes affecting all areas of the state (Ayres, Waldorf, & McKendree, 2013; Batalova & McHugh, 2010; Indiana Department of Education, 2014; Kindler, 2002; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2007; Waldorf, Ayres, & McKendree, 2013). This sharp increase in the ELL population creates difficulties for teachers in meeting the needs of these students whose needs are often unique and complex. Many times, ELL needs are outside of the experience of K–12 teachers, who are working with many of these students for the first time, with little or no training in ELL specific practices and pedagogies. With the increasing number of ELLs in K–12 classrooms in Indiana schools, teachers need additional resources and assistance to support students academically. Although professional development content on ELLs has been provided to teachers, many still lack knowledge, specific training and the experience necessary to address the needs of ELLs. Teachers from socio–economic backgrounds different from those of many ELLs, lack the experience of interacting with students

from diverse settings, impacting effective teaching (Zeichner, 2009). Despite ELL specific professional development initiatives, research that shows that teachers often disregard ELLs as “not their job” (Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson–Gonzalez, 2008; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008; Valdés & Castellón, 2010; Zhang, 2013) and “just good teaching” is sufficient (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

One of the most critical and often overlooked areas of teaching pedagogy is the area of elementary writing for ELLs. Teachers of writing of ELLs lack awareness of the pedagogy for elementary writers, but also theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), sociolinguistics, ELL development and writing (Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2011; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Harper & de Jong, 2004). Writing at the elementary school is becoming more critical for ELLs and English Only (EO) students as high–stakes tests are being implemented with greater frequency. Additionally, teacher evaluations are being tied to student performance and student growth, regardless of background of the student, such as poverty, English Language Learner, or Special education status due to policies such as No Child Left Behind Waivers (Gilmetdinova, Klassen, & Morita–Mullaney, 2014). Therefore, teachers need to teach diverse groups of students that come from multilingual and diverse backgrounds, as well as their EO students and how to write not only to meet the needs of required summative assessments, but also for their future careers (Magrath, Ackerman, Branch, Clinton Brisrow... & Eliot, 2003).

For many teachers, their university or in–service training did not address multiculturalism, bilingualism or ELL specific writing training, (Tanenbaum, Boyle,

Soga...Taylor, 2012), and this is more often the case for rural school districts (Berurbe, 2000). Despite the smaller population of ELLs found in small and rural schools, there are unknown and unforeseen difficulties that teachers in these situations face. In addition to this, teachers of ELLs in rural districts have less support for their ELLs, placing an increased burden on these teachers, yet, they are morally and legally obligated to provide equitable education for their students (Berube, 2000; Flynn & Hill, 2005; Huang, 1999; Yoesel, 2010).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The number of ELLs moving into rural schools is increasing in Indiana (Ayres et al., 2012; Waldorf et al., 2013), where the population of ELLs in schools can be as high as 25% in some elementary classrooms (Indiana Department of Education [IDOE]: Compass, 2015). While the number of ELLs may be higher in urban settings, the proportion of ELLs in rural settings is moderate to high. This proportion may be high enough that teachers start to encounter difficulties teaching students that do not have the same backgrounds as their EO counterparts. Teachers in rural districts typically have less preparation in dealing with ELLs and other diverse student populations (Berube, 2000; Hill & Flynn, 2004; Yoesel, 2010). Nonetheless, teachers need to be able to serve the rural ELL populations in their classrooms equitably and meet the needs of their students, particularly in the area of writing, one of the most challenging and demanding aspects of literacy (Berube, 2000; Larsen, 2014; Schleppegrell, 2004).

Rural classroom teachers are feeling the impact of ELLs in their classrooms, and are struggling to meet this challenge with little support from district personnel (Flynn & Hill, 2005; Yoesel, 2010). Rural schools are often slow to develop programs designed to assist students with specific educational needs, such as immigrants who are often ELLs (Huang, 1999). Support such as ELL or multilingual education teachers are rare in rural districts, and when these staff roles are not instituted, the responsibility falls to all of the school staff who have limited preparation and varying degrees of interest in meeting the needs of ELLs (Berube, 2000; Flynn & Hill, 2005; Gruber, Wiley, Broughman, Stizek, & Burian-Fitzgerald, 2002; Yoesel, 2010). The National Center for Education Statistics states that 82 percent of rural teachers have never participated in professional development regarding the needs of ELL students, which further propels the need for a study of this type (Gruber, et al., 2002).

Teachers who are not aware of the language difficulties that ELL students encounter may inadequately address their students' needs (Fillmore & Snow, 2000). This especially holds true for the teaching of academic language, the type of language used in school tasks, which differs from everyday language used by students (Brisk, 2015; Cummins, 2008; Gibbons, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2004). ELLs and EO students learn and produce written language in different ways, and ELLs require responsive approaches and additional and distinctive linguistic supports (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

Writing skills are among the most challenging skills for ELLs to acquire, and the area that teachers are most unprepared to teach (Larsen, 2014). In order to be

effective writing teachers of ELLs, teachers should be aware of the progression of writing that differ for ELL students. Teacher's understanding of the challenges inherent to writing in a second language, and how to support students through their existing writing abilities in their native language or first language (L1) hold promise for improving writing instruction and outcomes for ELLs (Brisk, 2015, p. 17). Many teachers who find that their ELLs can speak seemingly without effort, in the context of "everyday" or social language, may have trouble with writing in academic contexts (Cummins, 2000). Coupled with teachers' limited preparation in the area of writing, teachers default to writing instruction designed for EO students (Larsen, 2014).

The most common writing approach is informed by the writing process movement. The process approach dates back to the 1970's and has been developed and advocated in writing pedagogy since its conception, particularly in elementary and middle schools (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1996; Graves, 1983; Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002). Process writing focuses on revisions and multiple drafts, instead of complete accuracy without much writing guidance from a teacher, through the typical five stages of writing: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002). Further iterations on process like the six traits of writing (Spandel, 2001, 2005) focus on improving specific areas of writing in the revision process, inviting teachers and students to specify their focus in the areas of ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. However, these writing approaches do not include direct instruction

about providing language resources to accomplish writing, and relies on the background knowledge of students in English literacy. For ELLs, there is often a disconnect between their prior experience or experiences with writing in their home country or L1, which makes the reliance on revisions in process writing problematic (Orteiemer–Hooper, 2013; Raimes, 1985). Process writing deemphasizes drafting and planning, with no focus for revision or editing (Brisk, 2015). Under process, students are asked to revise writing, but are not told how to do this explicitly. These practices diminish explicit instruction in writing that ELLs may need.

ELLs in rural schools are influenced by the historical practices of the process approach in writing. With its lack of emphasis on prior knowledge, lack of audience consideration and its linear approach of draft, revision to final product, ELLs are disadvantaged in this writing paradigm. Using the methodology of a case study, and a classroom discourse analysis, this study will examine the teacher's spoken discourse in a classroom around writing instruction in a third and fifth grade rural classroom in Indiana.

### **1.3 Purpose of this Study**

This study investigated classroom discourse about the writing instruction of English Language Learners (ELLs) in two elementary classrooms in Indiana. The purpose of this research is to focus on the patterns of classroom discourse used by teachers in the classroom when delivering writing lessons. This includes interaction with students and conferences with students, specifically related to writing instruction, and activities that influence the writing activities. This particular study



will examine the elementary teachers' practices in writing instruction and their self-reported outcomes for ELLs.

The classroom discourse analysis of these elementary settings focuses on Christie's (2005) focus on *curriculum genres*, based on work in genre pedagogy, and language discourse based in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Curriculum genres describe the stages of teacher discourse, and provide a lens to observe the types of language teachers use to accomplish their instructional writing goals. By observing the types of language used by the teachers in classroom discourse, and the approaches to teaching, this can help inform future practices for elementary writing for ELLs.

Classroom discourse in the elementary writing classroom is important to observe in classrooms due to the unique linguistic needs of ELLs that teachers are now serving. As writing is a skill that is crucial for higher level employment skills (National Commission on Writing for America's Families & Colleges, 2004), these skills need to be emphasized in elementary school education to secondary and into college education (Magrath et al., 2003). Despite the amount of time dedicated to reading in elementary school, there is little time dedicated specifically to writing. The limited time spent on writing instruction is often "stolen" from other areas, such as reading or English Language Arts (ELA), with three hours or less dedicated specifically to writing every week (Magrath et al., 2003, p. 23). Due the academic pressures to teach other subjects, studying spoken discourse becomes even more

critical, as it is often a less emphasized subject area. Writing permeates all subject areas and merits further investigation in elementary settings.

Teacher's spoken discourse in the classroom is the primary means of communication with their students. Depending on the language backgrounds and English proficiency levels of ELLs, this spoken discourse can serve as a model for language use or serve as an inhibitor to meaningful access to writing instruction. Taking a closer look at how teachers perceive their teaching practices through interviews and analyzing their discourse in classroom observations can illuminate how this writing instruction is communicated to students and how these can be made more comprehensible for ELLs.

This study is important because there is limited research in the area of elementary writing for ELLs, particularly in rural settings (Larsen, 2014; Yoesel, 2010). ELLs in rural areas are less likely to have teachers that are trained in meeting the needs of their ELL learners, or have a support system in place, particularly in the area of writing (Berube, 2001; Magrath et al., 2003; Menken & Antunex, 2001; Yoesel, 2010). Teachers often are not aware of the needs of their ELLs, and believe that best practices for all students are best practices for ELLs (de Jong & Harper, 2005). This has allowed the teaching of writing influenced by process writing to persist as the dominant paradigm and practice. Classroom discourse analysis using SFL analysis can provide important insights into how writing instruction is being approached in the writing classroom and its impact on ELLs' writing.

The research on spoken discourse around writing took place at a small rural school in an elementary school in Indiana. This school district has experienced an increase in their ELL population over the past decade, similar to the entire state of Indiana. This research focused on two teachers that have a large number of ELLs in their classrooms and at the developing and progressing levels of writing instruction: Grades three and five. This study examined the teachers' writing instruction from a case study approach.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of classroom discourse directed at ELLs specifically concerned with writing instruction?
2. How are current teaching practices supporting ELLs' writing and linguistic development?
3. What strategies do classroom teachers use to facilitate the learning of writing for ELLs?

Through a multiple case study of a third and fifth grade classroom, classroom discourse related to writing instruction was analyzed to show how writing instruction is conceived and directed towards ELLs. These teachers had a high number of ELLs in their classes and balanced their instruction between EO students and ELLs. This case study involved two teachers at the same site with different educational backgrounds, experience and teaching philosophies. The potential for a comparative study is present, but this study will focus only on their individual writing

instruction, and how this is situated within the school and the site. Common themes occurring between teachers were noted throughout the research.

Evidence from multiple cases are often more compelling and robust (Yin, 2009). Although these findings will be within the same site, there is a great difference between the teachers' years of experience, goals for their students, student abilities, English proficiency levels, and native language strengths of students. There are many factors that interact during classroom observations, interviews and general observations of the site, creating a great deal of relevant variables. The interviews of teachers focused on how they perceived their own teaching practices, their self-reporting of interactions with ELLs, and how they address the needs of their ELL students.

Interviews were conducted with the two teachers and focused specifically on their writing discourse in the classroom populated with ELLs and EOs. The researcher asked for the teacher to comment on practices, thought processes, and their conceptualization of current practices. Member checking provided another source of information in this study by providing more detail and insight into the conceptualizations of the classroom teachers and how they met the needs of their students. Interviews were closely related to the direct observations conducted as part of the case study. The researcher is aware of reflexivity: how the effect of the researcher on the outcomes of the study, in the interactions with the interviewed teachers, and will consider this when constructing questions (Yin, 2011). Statements were made that allowed participants the opportunity to reflect upon their own

practices or ideas during the interviews such as: “You mentioned about diversifying instruction when talking about teaching both EO and ELL students—could you talk a bit more about that?” Direct questioning was used during the questioning process, in order to dissuade teachers from answering questions and encourage honest responses. There were a total of six interviews, three per teacher, ranging from 30–60 minutes for each interview. Each interview was transcribed, and excerpts of the interviews were made available to participating teachers.

Classroom observations consisted of classroom observations with both teachers, over the course of four to five lessons focusing on discourse related to writing in each classroom. These classes were attended by both EO and ELL students, and the instruction was directed at both groups. These observations were conducted at times that were coordinated before the initial observation. These observations were audio recorded and artifacts such as pictures of the classroom, instructional materials, handouts and de-identified student work were retrieved. There were a total of 12 observations conducted, six in each teacher’s classroom. Each classroom observation took place over an hour, in order to observe as much writing instruction as possible.

### **1.5 Summary**

The number of ELLs in rural schools is increasing year by year, and the need for writing support in elementary school for this population is increasing as well. This study will take a closer look at how discourse is being used in the elementary writing classroom to communicate writing expectations with ELLs & EO students. The focus

of this study is how teachers themselves think about their teaching approaches, their use of discourse in the classroom, and how they communicate their expectations to their students.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The number of English Language Learners (ELLs) is increasing each year, and proportionally more teachers in rural districts have ELLs in their classrooms (Berube, 2001; Yoesel, 2010; Wright, 2005). As high stakes tests continue to increase, there is more focus on areas that are particularly difficult for ELLs, such as writing. The classroom discourse regarding writing in the classroom for ELLs is of great importance, and looking at this can help teachers identify how they are meeting the unique writing needs of their ELLs.

This literature review will first discuss language and discourse, and how spoken discourse and writing discourse are characterized. The literature will identify how language is described as a meaning making system, how discourse is characterized, and how it is reflected in classroom discourse concerning writing instruction. Secondly, I will discuss research on historic writing practices, alternative writing approaches, and describe how classroom discourse and writing practices are intertwined. Then, I will discuss writing approaches researched with a specific focus on ELLs. Lastly, I will discuss the phenomenon occurring in writing instruction for ELLs within rural schools.

## **2.1 Language, Discourse, Classroom Discourse, Writing Discourse**

As a sociolinguist, James Paul Gee (1999) describes discourse as the language that we use for pragmatic purposes and how nuances within discourse are attributed to values, beliefs and ways of doing things in local social contexts. Gee distinguishes between “little d and big D” discourse. “Little d” is the discourse of daily life and encompasses the features of language that appear on the surface. More simply, it is language-in-use. “Big D” discourse refers to the underlying ideologies, values and beliefs that influence the production of discourse. These distinctions assist us in refining discourse to be a socially mediated process laden with the influences of the big “D.”

Classroom discourse is planted firmly in sociolinguistic realities as framed by Gee (1999), but Christie’s (2005), extends our understanding by examining the teacher talk that occurs within these socially mediated classroom environments. Framed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Christie examines classroom discourse as an applied sociolinguist, examining how language is framed, organized and expressed. The approach of classroom analysis approaches it as a structured experience that has defined relationships and roles within the experience. By studying these experiences from a sociolinguistic perspective, the discourse between teachers and ELLs can be more carefully observed. One way of observing this is through classroom discourse, often referred to as teacher talk.

Teacher talk is an important means of modeling thinking and approaches to writing in the classroom. As teachers explicitly speak aloud about writing, they are



presumptively modeling what they expect of their students. Teachers use language in the classroom to invite students to become part of the classroom learning community and participate actively in the learning process through written expression. This is characterized by community building language, making the expectation of participation clear to students, and creating the situation for the application of writing (Lemke, 1989; Mohr, 1998).

Some of the previous findings from teacher talk in the elementary literacy classroom include an emphasis on active participation and community in the writing classroom encouraging cooperation between students and teachers, building a healthy interdependency (Mohr, 1998; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Indirect requests using language like “why don’t you” or question and answer sequences were often used as a way of directing students to accomplish goals and test knowledge of students, as well as using “why” questions to encourage students to reason and reflect (Mercer, 2000; Mohr, 1998). The use of teacher talk posits that language is a collaborative and socially-mediated process from teacher to student and student to student.

Within classroom discourse, a number of different strategies are used. Active learning and application of metacognitive strategies are applied in the classroom, often referencing model texts such as stories or essays. Brainstorming activities are utilized for students to use as the basis for their writing, in pre-writing activities. Communal language usage is very common in classroom discourse, to contribute to language resources available to students, contribute to the feeling of a shared

community, and involve themselves in the learning with others (Mohr, 1998). Providing strategies, explaining purposes behind classroom activities, vocal think-alouds and encouraging student think-alouds were found to be effective for ELLs (Mercer, 2000). Teacher feedback is characterized as largely positive with teachers providing specific praise through feedback, and eliciting detail through questions when responses were lacking. Open-ended questions were common, which lowered the possibility of giving an incorrect response, and participation was valued over accuracy or efficiency of assignment completion. Providing ELLs with opportunities to engage in spoken classroom discourse and interact in the classroom are also important in classroom discourse that supports the development of writing among ELLs (Gibbons, 2006).

Students' writing abilities often develop from their experience with spoken language, but the difference between spoken and written language is important to distinguish in order to clarify the difference between these two modes of communication, specifically for ELLs (Brisk, 2015; Halliday, 1989). Spoken language is a domain of language that students have more experience with, are more comfortable with, and is typically negotiated with the listener until the meaning has been communicated, with the exception of spoken modes such as lectures or speeches. Speaking in elementary classrooms is interactive as listener and speaker anticipate timely responses from one another, and immediately negotiate meaning. Written language, on the other hand, cannot be achieved through the linguistic styles of oral discourse, which is framed by swift, personal & immediate feedback.

There are different expectations of written language that involve use of academic discourse, which seldom offers immediate feedback (Cummins, 2008; Schleppegrell, 2004).

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) was postulated by Cummins (2008) discussing the differences between everyday language (BICS) and academic language (CALP), and how this must be taken into consideration when teaching ELLs. It is important to note that ELLs' linguistic proficiencies vary greatly across language modes and across contexts—a student may be “proficient” when talking with a classmate about baseball or video games, but may lack proficiency when giving a speech or writing about the US civil war (Cummins, 2008; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). The language proficiency of ELLs is shaped by the language they interact within their school settings. If students are not given the explicit training or modeling to talk about content area subjects in their L1 (first language) or L2 (second Language), then the domain of speaking will remain underdeveloped. Teachers must be able to distinguish the difference between students producing everyday language, for speaking, and academic language, used frequently in writing, and provide instruction to scaffold and guide students into being able to use spoken academic language in school context (Schleppegrell, 2004). Spoken academic language is the bridge to written expression.

### **2.1.1 Differences in Spoken and Written Language**

Teachers of all students need to be aware of the difference in expectations between spoken language and written language (Schleppegrell, 2004). Writing tasks for students are often shrouded in mystery, with teachers not making expectations explicit, nor providing clarification on instructions, often using unfamiliar metaphors alongside explicit directions. For example, “use your own words” or “write clearly” are confusing metaphors for ELLs (Schleppegrell, 2004). Lack of linguistic knowledge about the features of language such as organization, linguistic features and academic use according to specific contexts of writing may make academic language “invisible” for teachers of ELLs (Christie, 1991). If the usage of academic language is “invisible” for ELLs, then students will struggle to acquire the appropriate language needed to negotiate academic content (Christie, 1991, p. 220). This is exacerbated by additional factors such as a mismatch of culture between ELLs, teachers and EO students, difference in socioeconomic status, or different language backgrounds (Cummins, 2001; Heath, 1983; Schleppegrell & de Oliveira, 2006; Valdes, 2001; Zeichner, 2009).

Writing instruction strives to make the usage of academic language in writing explicit and to communicate the expectations of the assignment and how academic language is to be used in order to give students access to participation in academic contexts (Schleppegrell, 2004). Teachers need to be aware of the social practices and contexts behind written assignments, if they are designed to inform, to tell a story, to persuade or argue for a point of view and how this is to be accomplished.

Not only must teachers be aware of the social purpose of these texts, but also the audience to which they are directed, and the relationship of the writer to the audience (Brisk, 2015; Christie & Derewianka, 2010). Finally, teachers should be aware of what they want their students to write about and what language they should use to accomplish these goals. The linguistic resources that students use in their spoken language may not be appropriate to fulfill the organized, staged goals of written assignments (Brisk, 2015; Gibbons, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2004).

Teachers benefit from knowing that students are “learning language and learning through language” (Halliday, 2007, p. 54). While students are being instructed, they are learning key concepts in writing *through* language, such as how to form an argument, write a letter, create a lab report, but they are also learning how to do these tasks *with* language simultaneously. Students have difficulty in connecting language used in instruction to language to be used in writing when this is not made clear through instruction and modeling (Brisk, 2015).

The focus on learning language and learning language through language is a practice that has not been emphasized in the writing practices in the United States (US). The U.S. elementary writing practices have been influenced instead by the process movement which is a writing movement that started in the U.S. in the 1970’s. By examining these influences, aspects of writing discourse and classroom practices will be illuminated.

## **2.2 Elementary Writing Instruction in the United States**

Writing instruction in the U.S. has been influenced by the writing process movement (Christie, 2005; Graves, 1983; Van Sluys, 2011). This has affected both the approach to writing for teachers and for teachers of ELLs as well. A history of writing instruction in the elementary school will help situate this study in its contemporary context.

### **2.2.1 History of Process Movement**

The process approach began in the 1970's and its influences can still be widely observed in contemporary writing contexts (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1996; Graves, 1983; Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002). The process movement is a linear approach to writing that focuses on the steps of writing, involving multiple drafts and improvements made towards the final, polished product. The process approach helped teachers focus on the process of writing, focusing on revisions and multiple drafts, instead of writers producing perfect writing in their first attempt. It employs five stages of writing: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002; Van Sluys, 2011). Applebee (1986) writes that the process approach "provided a way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does (planning, revising, and the like) instead of in terms of what the final product looks like (patterns of organization, spelling, grammar)" (p. 96).

For ELLs this can be helpful in that the process approach allows teachers the freedom to focus indirectly on the writing process instead of direct instruction focusing on grammatical accuracy, spelling and sentence structure (Pritchard &

Honeycutt, 2006). These writing tasks that are developed under a process writing approach offers advantages for ELLs to provide chances to revise and improve developing writing gradually in different areas. However, process writing still may not include direct instruction about writing, and may be disconnected with ELLs' prior experience or experiences with writing in their home country or in their L1 (Ortmeier–Hooper, 2013; Raimes, 1985).

Process writing gives teachers the resources needed to provide students with guidance on how or what to draft or plan, but provides no guidance for revision or editing, or models for students to reference (Brisk, 2015). In process writing, the teacher is often the sole audience being written for, as they are the reviewer of each writing revision. Due to this limited scope, students are often writing to a single author, the teacher, which diminishes the authentic social purpose of the text whose audience extends beyond the teacher to peers, principals, families and others (Martin & Rose, 2008). Motivation and engagement in writing can be greatly enhanced when the audience extends to multiple authentic audiences. Authentic audiences extend the writing task outside of the classroom, and help students consider additional viewpoints and approaches to writing.

Written texts are representations of previously expressed experiences that often occur outside the boundaries of schools (Brisk, 2015; Martin, 2009). An assigned essay or assignment such as writing about a summer vacation for a student whose family are migrant workers may be unfamiliar and not match the students' lived experiences. Nonetheless, the ELL will be expected to brainstorm, draft, revise

and publish with ideas that do not match the social intentions of the writing prompt. Lack of consideration of their unique background experiences makes this portion of the process writing framework problematic. The Big D of discourse suggests that there are values and beliefs that are inferred within the focused writing assignment of a “summer vacation.” This privileges particular dominant narratives of summer vacations and may dissuade writing among students if the content of their story is not a dazzling summer vacation in line with the teachers’ expectations.

The process movement has not only influenced the writing practices of educators and students, it also has also permeated the spoken discourse of little “d” and big “D” at the classroom level. The following section details how process writing has influenced the use of spoken discourse in elementary classrooms.

### **2.2.2 Process Writing: Instructional Approaches and Activities**

Writing instruction is influenced by writing researchers such as Graves (1983) and Calkins (1996), who focus on the identity of writers in the elementary school. Such foci include the use of Writer’s Workshop with students, which provide students with the guidance of the teacher as well as the chance to work independently. In addition to the emphasis on process writing, workshops, and group work, there is implementation of mini–lessons before beginning the writing task, developing ideas based on student experience and student choice (Atwell, 1998). Writing instruction in the classroom is approached with providing mini–lessons, writing time, teacher conferences, group work and writing workshops, with all of these activities revolving around the constant revision of writing (Calkins, 1996;



Graves, 1983). Workshops with students and teachers are a frequent happening two to three times a week. Teachers are advised to work with students one-on-one at least once a week to help revise and improve their writing (Calkins, 1996; Spandel, 2005).

The backgrounds of students and social dimensions of language learning are considered when teaching and planning writing activities, as student choice of writing topics is often part of the writing lesson (Calkins, 1996; Graves, 1983; Van Sluys, 2011). Writers who engage their world actively through writing show connections between their written work and their realities, which in turn help students to become better writers (Calkins, 1996). These approaches have been suggested as helpful for ELLs, and a way for Writing Workshops to facilitate English language development for all students, granted that they acquire the proper language resources to write (Van Sluys, 2011). Considering the backgrounds of students in writing is important, but teachers often assume that students share similar experiences, and may not include experiences relevant to ELLs in these writing tasks (Meier, 2011). Over application of this approach may lead students to learn that writing is only done with topics that they are interested in, and may approach their writing with social language versus academic language.

Process writing has lost some of its presence, but its imprint is largely seen in elementary classrooms (Kara-Soteriou & Kaufman, 2002). Many teachers have clearly adopted process writing approaches in their classroom, but these practices vary widely amongst teachers and schools. Writing workshops and practices

influenced by process writing are still prevalent in pre and in-service teacher education, but many of these practices become rigid and fragmented when implemented in the classroom (Kaufman, 2002). Many teachers interpret the process movement as a step-by-step formula for students to follow in order to fulfill writing assignments, and at times can elevate the formula of writing above the product of writing, creating a disconnect between the process and the final writing product (Labbo, Hoffman & Roser, 1995). Others claim to use process writing approach in their classes, but only implement some aspects, such as multiple drafts and active editing, while not addressing other elements such as choosing a topic or writing with their students (Graves, 1983). Teachers are also weary of adapting new practices and innovations that are not compatible with their current beliefs and teaching practices (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

Teachers may see process as a means that allows students freedom to explore writing over the course of many writing tasks, with the opportunity to write multiple drafts about different topics. Others may falsely interpret this as practices that form a linear process of brainstorming, prewriting, drafting, revising and editing that is applied to each writing assignment and encouraged by textbooks and other instructional materials, regardless of the purpose of the assignment (Van Sluys, 2011). The process approach is used in elementary writing to produce general writing assignments such as papers, letters, or stories, but there are concerns that the process approach leads students to use these linear tools as their only approach to all forms of writing (Christie, 2005; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006). Students

“appear to respond to the type of feedback they receive” and depending on this, will adapt whatever writing model they use with this linear organizational framework (Chavez, Matsumura & Valdes, 2004, p. 469). Depending on the linguistic background of the students, the process approach may rely too heavily on teacher assumptions about common writing exercises, or the level of literacy in English.

### **2.2.3 Writing Skills for Elementary English Language Learners**

Writing skills in the elementary and secondary classroom have been neglected for all students. Students are often expected to build off of their background knowledge and familiarity with written genres to successfully produce assignments for their classroom teachers, high stakes testing, and eventually, college entrance qualifications (Magrath et al., 2003; National Commission on Writing for America's Families [NCWAF], 2004). Writing instruction is one of the least addressed areas in the preparation of new teachers, and ELLs often have difficulty reaching the expectations of writing tasks without linguistic support given by teachers (de Jong & Harper, 2005; Enright, 2013; Gibbons, 2002). Writing proficiency will be even more important in the coming years due to the importance of writing as a means of becoming college and career ready (Hirvela, 2013; Magrath & Ackerman, 2003). Second language writing has a great focus at the college level and secondary level, with journals and symposia being dedicated to providing a research base for first year writing composition teachers, researchers, and students that wish to gain greater proficiency in their second (or third) language. However, there is little research conducted on elementary writing for ELLs (Matsuda & de Pew, 2002).

Research has been conducted on the writing of ELLs in the elementary classroom, focusing on students in the research and general strategies for teachers. Books and studies that focus on the instruction of the teacher give general strategies for teaching ELLs while highlighting case studies of students in the class (Gibbons, 2002, 2009; Orteimer-Hooper, 2013). The studies that have focused specifically on teacher discourse that have been done at this level in the U.S. have looked at content-area subjects in science and math (de Oliveira, 2013; de Oliveira & Dodds, 2010; Lan, 2013). This research will focus specifically on teacher discourse in the English Language Arts (ELA) in an elementary school during writing instruction.

### **2.3 English Language Learners and Writing**

ELLs are classified into multiple levels based on their language proficiency. These levels are classified across the different domains of language, speaking, listening, reading, writing, and each student is evaluated from level one (entering) to level five (bridging) (WIDA, 2012). These proficiency levels in each language domain are presumptively used by teachers to determine appropriate levels of instruction and expected language production for ELLs.

ELLs come from a variety of different linguistic and educational backgrounds, and have a variety of experiences and cultural values that are different from EO students. There is a persistent achievement gap between ELLs and EO students (Kindler, 2002) and ELLs have had higher school dropout rates than EO students (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2000), and have diverse populations with different backgrounds (Lucas, 2011; Valdes, 2001; Valdes & Castellon, 2011). Teachers must

be able to support the developing language abilities of this underrepresented population of students that are often at high risk of failure, but their needs are difficult for teachers to meet. Students that cannot connect to the writing tasks conducted in the classroom cannot develop writing skills as well as students that can recognize the types of assignments and expectations inherent to the educational context, particularly if are they familiar with the schooling traditions that have evolved from western European traditions (Schleppegrell, 2004). Cultural mismatch and linguistic difficulties exacerbates the problems in the classroom that ELLs experience. For any learner, the importance of writing must be made clear for all students, particularly ELLs. The need for writing is common across all career paths, from veterinarians to store clerks—and the need for writing is even more common in our social lives as well, with the advent of blogging, social media, and e-mails (NCWAF, 2004).

Surveys of institutions of higher education illustrate that few institutions provide sufficient preparation for mainstream teachers regarding the teaching of ELLs (Coady, Harper, & de Jong, 2011; Menken & Antunez, 2001). Out of the 50 states in the United States, only three do not require teachers to have preparation for working with ELLs, Indiana being included within these three (Lucas, 2011; Tanenbaum, et al., 2012). In particular, ELL writing in the K–12 classroom is an area that has experienced a general lack of attention in U.S. schools, with elementary receiving the least amount of attention (Harklau & Pinnow, 2009; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008; Matsuda & de Pew, 2002; Ortmeier–Hooper & Enright, 2011).

Second Language Writing (SLW) is a field that has greatly increased in research and scholarship in the past two decades with the establishment of the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, but SLW in the elementary classroom has not experienced as much coverage in this research: The need for more scholarship on this group of L2 writers is clear, yet our field has yet to establish a base map for understanding these elementary writers and their writing contexts. As a result, these students often remain outside the purview of many second language writing specialists (Ortmeier–Hooper & Enright, 2011, p. 167).

### **2.3.1 Writing and the use of the Primary Language with English Language Learners**

Reyes (1992), Samway (2006), and Gregory (2008) discuss the importance of the use of the L1 in the use of writing education for ELLs. In some process writing classrooms, for instance, Reyes (1992) reports that the use of English takes priority over the L1 of ELLs, and that a “one size fits all” approach to writing robs students of the opportunity to use their native language, due to unfamiliarity with ELLs’ natural language processes (p. 435). Samway (2006) advocates for the use of alternate forms of writing due to ELLs’ potential gap between their comprehension and production of writing, such as transitioning from scribbling, to the use of visuals to standardized writing. Gregory (2008) advocates for the use of children’s cultural knowledge in writing and the inclusion of cultural practices and home literacy practices in the development of literacy and writing. Many of these writing professionals discuss the importance of bringing their own life experiences into the

writing process, talking about their own interests and developing their own topics (Calkins, 1996; de la Luz Reyes, 1992; Graves, 1983; Gregory, 2008; Samway, 2006). If teachers are weary about the use of the students' L1 in the writing classroom, however, this can potentially remove a language resource that is not consistently available to all ELLs.

Literacy in the L1 of ELLs is one of the most important resources and predictors of academic success in reading and writing (Cross, 2011; Cummins, 1996; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002). Students with L1 literacy can “map on” concepts in their L2 to concepts that they have learned before, and apply this to their writing (Cross, 2011, p. 9). According to Cummins (1981), when an ELL builds on the existing knowledge of literacy in their L1, they do not need to relearn this in the L2. This common underlying proficiency means that ignoring the L1 when teaching writing neglects the skills that many ELLs already have. Allowing the use of the L1 in writing and building on the existing writing skills, even in the case of those with weaker writing skills, will be faster and produce more meaningful gains (Goldenberg, Rueda, & August, 2006). Implementing activities such as journal writing in the L1 can help to introduce writing as a way of communicating to the teacher topics that are important to students by having them write independently on a topic (Reyes, 1991), or assigning journals as a dialogue between teacher and student (Meier, 2011). This allows teachers to give students more opportunities to write that is not restricted by limited proficiency in English (Van Sluys, 2011).

### **2.3.2 In/Exclusion of ELL Writers in Process Writing Literature**

Graves (1994), Calkins (1996), Spandel (2005), & Van Sluys (2011) lead the writing movement, but very rarely address the needs of ELLs in the practice of writing. There are some mentions of working with students with knowledge of multiple languages (Van Sluys, 2011), but this is mentioned briefly, and other, older works make very few mentions of this group (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1996; Graves, 1983). Many of these are characterized as being specifically for Spanish speakers either by identifying them by language group or by pseudonym (Spandel, 2005; Van Sluys, 2013). Many of these approaches suggest the use of the students' L1 in the writing approaches, gradually adding English to their writing over time, or simply providing native language versions of worksheets or teaching materials. This is generally justified because of these students having the greatest control over their L1 and being able to produce writing more naturally. However, for students with undeveloped literacy in the L1, this approach can be limiting. There is little information given about going into greater detail about the concepts of SLA, possible discrepancies in L1 and L2 literacy, students' academic backgrounds or interrupted schooling, or the effective use of the L1 or language resources that teachers can make available to students. In larger, urban schools, the presence of an ELL aide, paraprofessional, or volunteer is taken for granted, but in rural schools with a large ELL population, this may not be the case, with the elementary teacher taking the lead (Berube, 2000).



While process writing informs us about existing ideologies about writing instruction at the elementary level and provides information about observed discourse in the classroom, there are other ideologies that can inform writing instruction and the view of language and the writing process. The next section will focus on Genre Based Pedagogy, following Halliday's (2014) approach to language.

#### **2.4 Systemic Functional Linguistics Genre Based Pedagogy**

Genre Based Pedagogy (GBP) is an approach that emphasizes the choices that writers must make to accomplish genres, which are "staged, goal oriented social processes" (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 6). Instead of mainly focusing on revision, GBP focuses on the social and cultural context of the genre, giving students the resources to make the best choices for the social process, the genre which they are writing (Hyland, 2007).

Although GBP may be interpreted to replace or push out process writing, this is not the case: according to Brisk (2015): "Process (writing) does not have to be displaced by GBP because it addresses different aspects of writing" (Brisk, 2015, p. 10). Process focuses on the process of writing, of revising, drafting, editing and publishing, but often times the topic of what students are to write are unclear, leading students to rely heavily on their experience with spoken language outside of school which may not match the hopeful academic product of the teacher (Rose & Martin, 2012). GBP provides students with clear expectations of production by giving a model, language resources and sample constructions before they start writing on their own.

Both approaches are based on the Vygotskian (1978) model of providing students scaffolding to achieve greater mastery of writing. Scaffolding refers to the process of student learning over a period of time that is guided by an “expert” to assist students to complete a task or develop new understandings and knowledge to be able to complete similar task in the future, independently (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Process focuses on making steady improvements, but in an almost experimental fashion, with some students unaware of the expectations that are associated with writing, whereas GBP can provide greater detail about the expectations of writing in specific genres, and the language resources that can be used to accomplish this task.

#### **2.4.1 Teacher Discourse & Genre-based Pedagogy**

There have been a number of genre-based approaches to writing, including the New Rhetoric approach, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and Australian genre theory which is centered on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory of language (Hyland, 2007; Hyon, 1996). Genre-based Pedagogy (GBP) provides linguistic tools to teachers to identify and intentionally use specific language in their teaching. This teaching approach, known as the Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC), helps to provide students with clearer language resources for writing. This allows teachers to use more powerful, detailed metalanguage to communicate the expectations of language more clearly. The TLC is composed of three stages: Deconstruction, Joint Construction, and Individual Construction (Figure 2.1). Originally developed by Rothery (1994), a number of GBP works reference this cycle and have used it in their

research and have observed it in classrooms, used it in genre–pedagogy based teacher training, potential teaching plans or curriculum programs (Brisk, 2015; de Oliveira & Iddings, 2014; Gebhard & Harman, 2011; Gebhard, Willett, Jimenez, & Piedra, 2010; Gibbons, 2002; Martin & Rose, 2014) . This cycle emphasizes the active role that teachers can have in text modeling and guiding students to discovering promising language resources and approaches to writing that can lead to improved use of academic language.

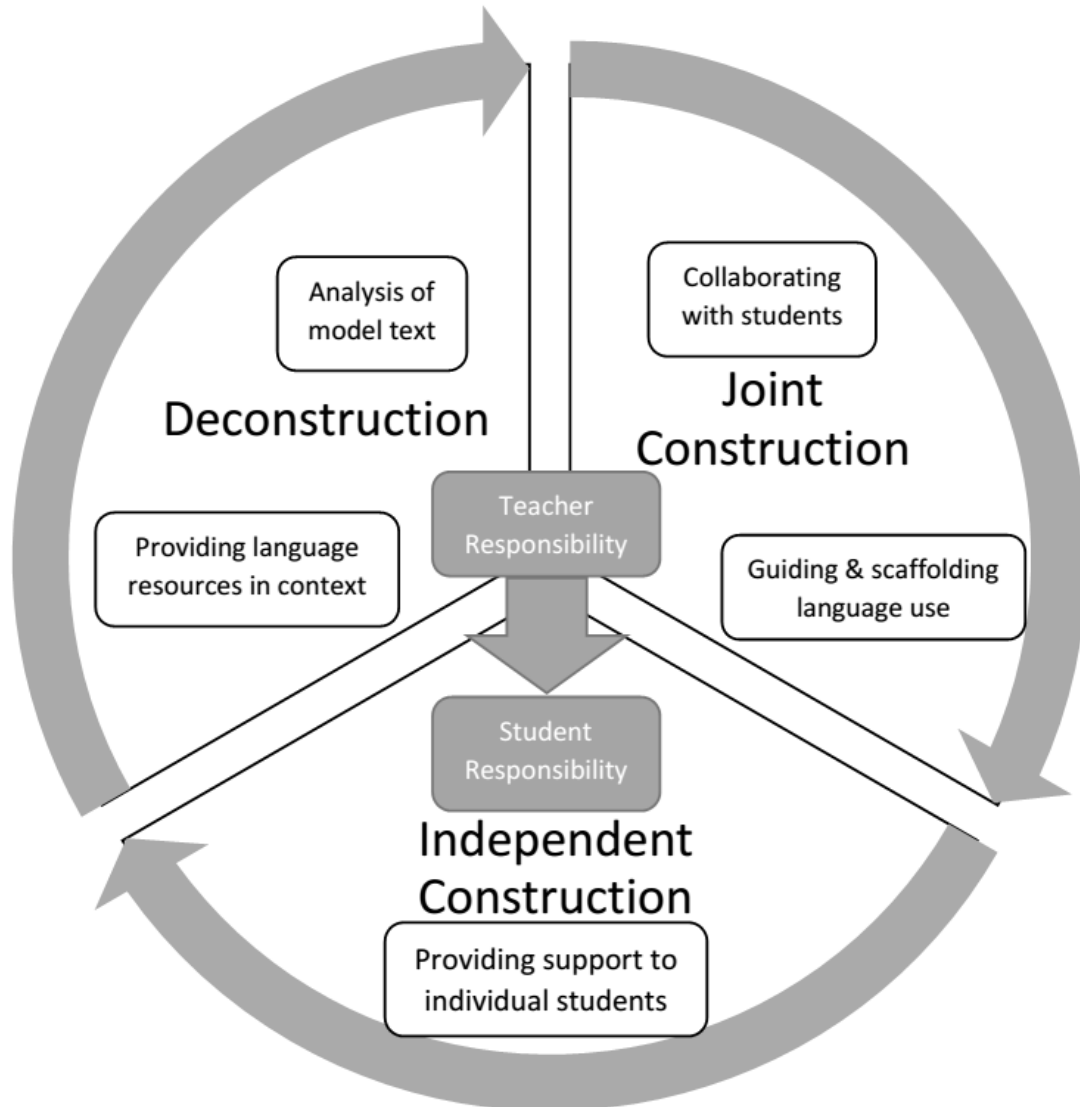


Figure 2.1. Teaching Learning Cycle. Adapted from Rothery, 1994.

In *Figure 2.1* we can see the circular stages of the TLC that can be repeated as needed with students and teachers. The TLC can be used with any genre or text, and can use the stages to establish control of the written genre and academic language being used by guiding, interacting and supporting students throughout the process. The Deconstruction stage has students and teachers working together to analyze a model text that students are expected to write, and guide them to explore the

language resources and how they are used in context, providing students with details about the types of language, vocabulary and constructions being used to accomplish the goal of the text (Gibbons, 2002, 2009; Brisk, 2015). The Joint Construction stage has students using the language resources discovered in the deconstruction stage and, with the teacher acting as a guide and facilitator, the teacher works with the students to scaffold the task and construct the same, or similar, writing task in the target genre. This stage relinquishes much of the authority to students, having the teacher act as a guide, and encouraging students to take part in providing input and suggestions. In the Independent Construction stage, students are given the chance to work independently to construct the target genre, using the language resources and practice from the Deconstruction and Joint Construction to more effectively construct their own writing task. Teachers can provide further guidance, scaffolding and support for students, but are expected to allow students the opportunity to work more independently.

#### **2.4.2 Explicit Instruction with Genre Based Pedagogy**

The difficulty with the use of academic language in writing is that the languages that students can produce and interpret are often at different levels. Teachers that assume that students are paying attention to the language they are modeling for students, but may not be involving students actively in their own writing constructions. The problem of explicitness in instruction is summarized well by Schleppegrell (2004, p. 11):

Explicitness is always relative, since presuppositions and background knowledge are called on in the interpretation of all texts. Lexicalization in itself does not necessarily make a text more unambiguous. Informal spoken texts typically use exophoric referents [references to other subjects within the text], pronouns, and generalized conjunctions, but the meanings constructed in such interaction are usually clear to the interlocutors, even with disfluencies, false starts, and elliptical structures. The broader illocutionary force of an utterance, combined with the shared context, even make it possible for interlocutors to comprehend and move forward in a conversation when someone mis-speaks. In any case, lexicalization is not the same thing as the clarity of meaning that is suggested by the term explicit.

In other words, teachers themselves are aware of the purpose and meaning they are making in their lectures and language, but the references, complex language usage, and reliance on background knowledge or shared contexts may make it difficult for students to fully understand, regardless of difficulties in comprehension of the language.

Teachers are often prompted to review before writing, elements of a writing task such as language, background knowledge, and details, but simply by providing these in a list, word wall, or saying them aloud (lexicalization) or modeling the thinking process with think-alouds is not enough for students to pick up on the expectations of the writing task. Furthermore, teachers may be unable to be explicit about the language resources that they want students to use in their writing. For

example, Michaels & Collins' (1984) research found that teachers had trouble describing to students what she wanted to see in the text beyond describing that the details should be "interesting". Other teachers may tell students to "add details", but cannot articulate specifically what sorts of details are most appropriate for the situation, such as reasons, adjectives, events or other specific language resources (Brisk, 2015).

Genre Based Pedagogy provides an explicit focus on working alongside students to create a text while allowing teachers to make better use of models, language resources, and model texts to incorporate and show how this language can be used with the Teaching Learning Cycle. A teacher using the TLC with a model text would be able to provide students with the language resources they need borrowing from the model text and additional language resources from the teacher, text book or other source material. The language resources proposed within this pedagogical approach is informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics, which provides the framework for this practice, and is the basis of the analysis featured in this research study.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

This research approached the analysis of classroom discourse through discourse analysis in the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and this theory of language acts as the theoretical framework for this research. As Christie (2005) frames language:

As the linguistic theories of language ... have gained in sophistication, so too has come a much enhanced sense not only of the enactment of social practices in language, but also of the construction of various ideological positioning in language. Language is never neutral, for it is necessarily involved in the realization of values and ideologies; just as it serves to realize such values and ideologies, it also serves to silence others. (p. 7)

Language used by the teacher reflects their values and ideologies and influence how classroom discourse is shared and mediated. Talk that occurs within the classroom is a social process; an activity that happens in the classroom which is social action communicated through discourse (Lemke, 1985). Discourse as defined by Fairclough (1992) is “a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation” which is in direct relation to the “relationship between social practice and social structure” (p. 64). SFL theory allows us to look at discourse that is language, as a system with purposeful actions and choices.

SFL theory provides posits that:

- 1) Language is a social semiotic, meaning making system:

This gives us a framework to see what moves are being made in language.

- 2) Furnishes us with information about how language works in each context:

Information about what dimensions of language are working together to create a context for language usage. (Eggins & Slade, 2004, Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Schleppegrell, 2004)



These two points will guide the following discussion.

1) Language as Meaning Making.

SFL theory is based on the idea that language is a social semiotic system, that all language takes place within text (Halliday, 1978). According to Halliday, a text is:

We can define text, in the simplest way perhaps, by saying that it is language that is functional. By functional, we simply mean language that is doing some job in some context...any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation, we shall call a text. It may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of.

The important thing about the nature of a text is that, although when we write it down it looks as though it is made of words and sentences, it is really made of meanings (Halliday & Hasan, 1989, p. 16).

In all productions of language, the communication of meaning and function is paramount, and is governed by the social and cultural contexts that are communicated by choices made by the speaker.

SFL looks at how the language functions in particular contexts, and the contexts of situations in which these language functions occur, as well as the language resources that are used to express this (Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). SFL is a theory of how speakers use language in everyday discourse, in written discourse, and in structured discourses, such as classrooms (Martin & Rose, 2008). SFL links language structure with social context, viewing language as a way to create meaning through a set of choices to make

meaning (Martin & Rose, 2008). Teacher discourse, instruction and writing instruction is achieved in order to accomplish goals, which is accomplished through language and students must be aware that “learning language” and “learning through language” is simultaneous (Halliday, 2007). This approach allows a focus on the specific language structures that construct meaning (Christie, 2005; Christie & Derewianka, 2010). As language changes depending on the person, social context, relationship and purpose behind which it is used, language usage and meaning making changes.

## 2) Language in Context: Genre, Register & Metafunctions.

This provides us information about what dimensions of language are working together to create a context for language usage. In SFL, there are three dimensions of language, genre, register, and metafunctions. This brings us to further discussion about genre and register as defined in SFL.

### 2.5.1 Genre

The SFL theory that is used in this analysis will discuss a functional model of language that addresses the use of language as a context of culture and situation. Language that occurs within the context of culture is seen as a *genre*: a social practice that operates at the level of culture (Christie & Derewianka, 2010). Genres are characterized as “staged, goal oriented social processes” (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 6) that occur within the social practices of cultures, and across various walks of life. Genre is also concerned with the organization of the text, the social purpose, and the specific *situation* in which it occurs. In the context of the situation of language,

there are three social functions of language that are always present in all domains of language, and these are the metafunctions of SFL. This is described as *register* by (Martin & Rose, 2008).

### **2.5.2 Register**

Register is defined as the configuration of the three metafunctions, *tenor*, *field* and *mode*. These metafunctions are always present in all communication, and by focusing on this it allows a focus on the content of the language interactions, to deconstruct the meaning made within language and identify critical language features used to make meaning, and discuss how ELLs interpret this in classroom discourse and how this is manifested in their writing production. Register variation takes place across three different contexts described as differences in *field* (the topic being discussed, such as science or social studies), *tenor* (the relationship between people, such as teacher vs student or classmate vs classmate), and *mode* (the way in which communication occurs i.e. classroom discourse vs. everyday chat, letter vs. article). These three contexts are directly related to three metafunctions, Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual. These specific contexts will be discussed in length in the methodology, due to its involvement in the analysis in the data.

Chapter 2 has discussed spoken language and discourse, how it is described as a meaning making system, how it is reflected in classroom discourse concerning writing instruction. This has also discussed historic writing practices and how classroom discourse and writing practices are intertwined. Finally, the discussion of

writing approaches researched with a specific focus on ELLs was briefly explained, and will be discussed throughout this research.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the case study methodology and language analysis used to approach the research questions outlined in the first chapter. This study took place during September to December in the 2014–2015 school year of the target study site. This case study was defined by the boundaries of having been conducted over the course of six months and in a single rural elementary school site.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed a multiple case–study approach with a third and fifth grade classroom teacher with a particular focus on spoken discourse in writing instruction. A case study research approach “involves the study of a case within a real–life contemporary context or setting” and is within a “bounded system” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). This methodology was chosen for this site in both classrooms to provide a strategy of exploring the object of study: the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. This methodology addresses multiple sources of information, including interviews and observations of a single site. The main unit of analysis was the spoken discourse about writing within the classroom. The goal of this case study was to focus attention on the specific details of these unique cases to convey an in–depth understanding of the case, which can conceptually inform scholars of similar situations, despite the unique characteristics of this study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **3.1.1 Multiple Case Study**

This multiple case study was bound within the same site, but focused on two different teachers. The comparison of two different cases strengthens the rigor of the inquiry (Yin, 2009). A multiple case sampling also adds greater confidence to findings by strengthening the precision, validity and stability of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Both case studies occurred at the same school site, therefore the observations are not intended to be generalizable to the public at large, but can conceptually be connected to English Language Learners' writing instruction in similar situations. The inclusion of two cases at the same site provides alternate perspectives from the teachers. However, this research is not intended to be representative of all writing teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) or English Only (EO) students, but can inform the practices of some through this detailed case study. The selection of a multiple case study adds to the confidence of these findings, and provides a more robust analysis. The intense focus on two participants in the same school allows for a rigorous analysis that can generate a conceptual framing of writing discourse and its underlying theory (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The choice of a multiple case study bounded within the same site with two different teachers was chosen for three different reasons. This case study approach allows the researcher to observe the school and teachers from a wider perspective in their classrooms and through interviews, and then focus in on the classroom discourse from a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) lens. It also allows a broader yet more detailed view of the situations in this rural school district and how writing

discourse for ELLs is addressed. This focus can illuminate differences and similarities between both teachers, commonalities within the school, and provide a more systematic view of this site (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2009; Yin, 2009). A multiple case design that follows the same procedures for each case provides more cumulative data and robustness, which strengthens the rigor (Yin, 2009).

### **3.1.2 Rationale for Case Study**

The justification for choosing a case study is to gain a greater understanding of what informs the teacher discourse of writing with ELL students in settings that have a heterogeneous mix of EO and ELL students. The focus on the “how and why” of a contemporary phenomenon and the investigation of a scenario in which I had little control made the decision to use a case study an easy one (Yin, 2009, p. 9). My main focus was how teachers approach the teaching of writing in the third and fifth grade classroom, the language that they use, how they present expectations to their students, and the assistance that they provide and facilitate in the classroom, particularly when concerned with ELLs. I wanted to see how teachers were approaching writing discourse in regards to their students, what patterns were evident in the classroom, how they structured their classrooms and the language that they used to teach their students. Specifically I wanted to explore the “real life context” of how teachers in rural districts dealt with a large population of ELLs in their classes, “how and why” they diversified their instruction, and their perceptions of teaching practices and their ability to meet the needs of their ELLs (Yin, 2009, p.2).

The selection of two teachers within the same school system was also purposeful. This decision to focus on a third grade teacher was made in order to observe the teacher discourse related to writing to address the high stakes testing that is introduced to students during the third grade. The decision to focus on a fifth grade teacher was made to observe the focus placed on academic language usage in regards to writing standards and meeting the required assessments for writing in the fifth grade.

### **3.1.3 Reliability and Validity of Case Study**

Reliability of case studies is defined by Yin (2009) as being able to reach the same conclusions by conducting the same procedures again, and reaching the same conclusion (p. 45). Therefore, the description of the steps and analysis that have been used in this study are crucial. The reliability of the data collected in this case study has been discussed in detail in the methods by discussing the collection of the data, including interviews, observations, student artifacts, researcher created memos and journals. Details to ensure reliability will include quotations relevant to conclusions made in Chapters four, five and six, excerpts from audio recordings and transcripts, extended examples of classroom discourse and member checking of conclusions made by the researcher with the participants when possible. The multiple sources of evidence collected in this research such as interviews, observations, field notes and memos helped to establish construct validity of this research (Yin, 2009). The robust data collected including interviews, memos, and transcriptions create multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence,



reinforcing the findings across multiple sources. This data will be used to support the conclusions made by the researcher and illustrate how these conclusions were reached.

#### **3.1.4 Context, Participants and Research Site**

This research design focused on classroom observations, interviews with teachers, researcher memos and site observations as part of this case study in a Midwest rural school district. The research employed a qualitative, multiple case study approach of teachers with ELLs enrolled with EO students in a rural Midwest school to address the proposed research questions. This approach provided an example of writing instruction for elementary ELLs in the Midwest, in a region with extreme changes in demographics in the past ten years, and has a growing need for research. This case study has utilized classroom observations, research notes, memos, classroom photos, school artifacts, and offer supplementary descriptions using detailed descriptions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In total, data sources included 12 classroom observations (six for each teacher), six interviews with the teachers (three for each), discussion with administrators and other stakeholders located at the site, researcher memos and pictures taken of the site and observed classrooms, school websites and department of education information.

Observations will focus on teacher discourse and teaching strategies based on classroom observations and focusing on writing instruction for ELLs and EO students. Classroom discourse analyzed under an SFL lens will provide a means at

looking at the choices teachers make through specific description of the language used in the meaning making process regarding writing instruction (Christie, 2005). Student information will be collected and coded to determine categorization before data analysis and observations.

### **3.2 Context of the Study**

The research site for this case study was a small, rural school located on the outskirts of a small Midwest City called Eagleland elementary School. Eagleland is located approximately 100 miles from one of the largest cities in the Midwest, and approximately 50 miles from the largest land grant university in the state. This town included about 20,000 people according to the most recent census report conducted in 2010. Eagleland is part of the a large state school community , which is composed of three other elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school, and has been ranked as an “A” school for the past three years, from 2011 to 2014 (IDOE: Compass, 2015).

#### **3.2.1 Local Demographics**

This study is uniquely situated in a rural setting, with a moderate density of ELLs, to highlight the phenomenon of ELLs in rural districts (Berube, 2000; Yoesel, 2010). The teachers in this study have lived in Indiana throughout their teaching careers and have attended schools within the state for their pre and post- service education. This school is located on the outskirts of a county classified as an urban population adjacent of a metropolitan area, which has a small school population compared to schools located near the center of the district (IDOE: Compass, 2015).

The local Midwestern Land Grant University classifies this county's schools as a Rural/Mixed district with a large city (Ayres et al., 2012; Waldorf et al., 2013). The school site therefore, falls within the classification of a small, rural school district. This site had over 400 students during the study with 51% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch, which is a school indicator for poverty. The Hispanic population & multiracial population is composed of about 40% of the student population, and 25% of the total population was classified as English Language Learners, although the concentrations within the observed classrooms were higher (IDOE: Compass, 2015).

The large influx of the Hispanic and ELL population around Eagleland elementary school occurred about 15 years ago, accounting for 21.6% of the community population (US Census, 2010). The presence of the Hispanic community was visible from the artifacts in the school, the name plates of students and the support provided by the school. These resources included pamphlets for services such as English as a Second Language and High School Equivalence (in English), and Spanish language versions of school policies such as dress code, lunch schedules, and school calendars. The largest employer in this area was a poultry processing plant, which employed the majority of the population of this area. Other employers included the local school district and hospital, which employed half and one third the number of total employees in the county respectively ("Top Employers: Cass County, Indiana", 2012). The administrators and teachers had the perception that

many of the parents of the ELLs and Hispanic students attending Eagleland elementary were employed in these jobs at the time of the study.

### **3.2.2 Participants**

The participants in this multiple case study were selected within the explicit sampling frame of the research questions and conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These teachers were certified and licensed elementary teachers in the state in which the research is taking place. Both teachers had taught at Eagleland for the entirety of their teaching careers. The third grade teacher has three years experience teaching at Eagleland, and the fifth grade teacher had 27 years of experience teaching at Eagleland. The school has a large percentage of ELLs (25%), and the classrooms being observed also had a large percentage of ELLs in the class. These ELLs were reported by the teacher to be levels two (beginning) through five (bridging), with the third grade teacher reporting a large number of level five students, and the fifth grade teacher reporting that almost all of her ELLs were level fours (expanding). These levels are based on the state's English Language Proficiency Standards (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2010). These reports were self-reported by each teacher, as this specific student data was not collected as part of this research. The reports provided by each teacher, were confirmed on multiple occasions to be accurate by the teachers' records. Table 3.1 is based on information collected through interviews with the teachers.

Table 3.1

*Teacher Profiles*

	Third Grade Teacher	Fifth Grade Teacher
Years' Experience Teaching at Eagleland Elementary	3 years (Recent Graduate of Local State University)	27 years
Students (English Language Learner [ELL] and English Only [EO] students)	10 ELL 10 EO	15 ELL 8 EO
ELL Levels	LV 2–2 LV 3–2 LV 4–2 LV 5–4	LV 2–1 LV 4–14
Percent ELLs in class	50%	65%
Experience teaching ELLs	3 years	27 years

**3.3 Data Sources and Procedures**

Data for this study was collected through classroom observations and teacher interviews. Data collection was conducted over the course of four months in the Fall of 2014, which was negotiated between cooperating teachers and administrators at the study site.

**3.3.1 Classroom Observations, Field Notes and Memos**

This research was conducted in pre-selected classrooms in which the teacher, principal and school district had consented to allow classroom observations to occur. The researcher conducted observations taking field notes, memos, audio recordings, student artifacts and photographs during classroom observations. Negotiations between the teacher and research were made weekly to observe classes in which

English Language Arts (ELA), specifically concerning writing instruction. These observations were scheduled consecutively, scheduling two observations a week, so that a complete writing unit could be observed, such as the planning stage of writing, or the review of a model text. Data was collected as a non-participant observer, collecting field notes and audio recordings without participating in the classroom proceedings (Atkinson & Hammerly, 2005). The researcher maintained as much as possible an etic perspective, paying attention to teacher-student interactions, and collected field notes and audio recordings focused on teacher discourse, while noting student interactions, responses and productions in field notes (Yin, 2009). Student data was not collected or analyzed except when directly related to teacher discourse, and these were strictly restricted to researcher field notes and memos. Memos were created alongside field notes and audio transcriptions regarding the research and target site. Audio recordings were transcribed focusing on teacher discourse, but also included exchanges between teachers and students, with student responses de-identified. The data that was collected was used to formulate findings based on multiple data points, such as observations, interview excerpts and student artifacts, as well as classroom discourse analysis. Member checking was conducted with teachers regarding classroom observations, classroom practices and approaches to teaching. This was conducted during interviews with teacher, and partial transcripts were provided to the teachers. Teachers were allowed to select the days that the observer came into the classroom, and had complete liberty in determining what the researcher was able to retain for analysis.

### **3.3.2 Interviews with Teachers**

Interviews with the teachers began at the start of the four month data collection period and coincided with writing units or projects that the teacher conducted in their classrooms. A total of three interviews were arranged and conducted with each participating teacher. Interview questions were pre-planned to focus on common concerns in regards to elementary writing, and reflexive, based on teachers' responses, the researchers' observations of teacher and student interactions and classroom practices. The motivation behind this line of questioning was to understand the teaching practices and justification of the approaches of the teachers concerning writing instruction for students. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The interviews averaged 30 minutes, occurring the same day or following day as the classroom observations. These interviews took place at the convenience of the participating teachers, and occurred within the school day, in the teachers' classrooms. These interviews focused specifically on interactions with ELL students based on writing instruction and classroom discourse. These interviews referenced specific student performance and researcher observations, and attempted to elicit as much information about the thought processes and justifications of the teachers' practices in addressing these students' needs' without being intrusive. Other topics addressed were home language influences, appropriateness of writing assignments, school/family interactions, and confidence in addressing the needs of their ELL students. Interview data from teacher's interviews provided additional context for excerpts of classroom discourse to

illuminate the motivations and reasoning of teaching decisions that were observed by the researcher.

### **3.3.3 Memos, Photographs, School Documents**

Additional data such as site photographs, school documents (directed towards parents), classroom posters, instructional materials and students were collected when possible. These were not part of the main analysis, and were included as reference for researcher memos, or for clarifications in interviews. Pictures, photographs or other data will not be featured in this data analysis, however.

## **3.4 Data Procedures**

### **3.4.1 Data Analysis**

There were two approaches to analyzing the data collected in this research. The first analysis focused on teacher observations and interviews, and approached the data from an emergent perspective, creating a series of codes and themes based on the data observed. This was phase 1, and is the basis of Chapter 4, an inductive analysis of themes occurring in the interviews and observations. The second analysis focused specifically on excerpts of classroom discourse, purposely selected for analysis. This analysis was informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a lens to interpret language, as well as Curriculum Genres, an approach to interpreting classroom stages and approaches, guided by Christie (2005). This analysis is the basis of Chapter 5, which used a deductive language analysis.



### **3.4.2 Phase 1 – Inductive Analysis: Teacher Interviews, Classroom Observations, Written Text and Written Artifacts**

Audio recorded teacher interviews and classroom observations were transcribed completely, with the exception of small talk not relevant to the research project (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 2006). Teacher interviews and classroom observations were subjected to multiple readings and analyses after initial transcription. After data was transcribed, a preliminary data analysis was conducted following Creswell's (2013) and Corbin and Strauss' (2008) suggested procedures. Data was analyzed using a three stage coding method of open, axial and then selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These include analyzing key themes and common themes across the data by coding, creating themes and memos. This coding contributed to establishing the validity of the study through internally examining the collected data and reexamining the phenomenon occurring in the data sources. Open coding consisted of examining data in interviews, observations and memos, creating labels and discovering categories that emerge, creating descriptive field notes about these codes, comparing these to other codes, and naming this phenomenon. Axial coding consisted of refining the codes created in open coding, categorizing these into themes, which included a number of codes under each theme. The data was reviewed under these newly created themes and codes. Selective coding narrowed the findings to directly address the research questions posed in this research. Through multiple readings of all transcripts, recurrent issues were identified and emerging themes and codes were created.

Excerpts from the transcriptions were selected as evidence for the themes and codes created from the analysis of interviews and classroom discourse. Selections were based on researcher analysis of memos, field notes and careful review of interview and observation transcripts. Student generated work was not be the focus of this analysis, but was included when it was mentioned by the teachers. Excerpts from student work were not included directly in the analysis, due to these artifacts being outside of the scope of this research.

The NVIVO qualitative research computer program was used throughout this research to create codes and themes, organize interview and observations transcripts, memos, photographs and other school documents. All data sources were coded with NVIVO for each teacher, and then over-arching themes and codes were established among the teachers. Throughout this process, a number of codes that represents common themes and patterns observed across each teacher and occasionally across both teachers were discovered. The themes and codes that were discovered in this research are listed in Table 4.1.

### **3.4.3 Phase 2 – Curriculum Genres & Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis**

In addition to themes and coding, SFL discourse analysis was also used to highlight meaningful segments of classroom discourse. SFL discourse analysis was utilized to focus on the grammatical and lexical features of teacher discourse observed in the classroom. SFL sees language as a system of meaning making, not of set rules to be followed (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This analysis will identify the specific grammatical and lexical choices used by the teacher to support students'

writing, as well as identifying problematic features of discourse that may impede student understanding. The two means of discussing the classroom discourse data will be through curriculum genres (Christie, 2005), and through an SFL lens (Christie, 2005; Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2003, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2012). This analysis was applied to these classroom observations, focusing on grammatical, lexical and paralinguistic features to focus on how teachers use instruction focusing on language and content. These discourse analyses were limited to one classroom excerpt per teacher. These selections were made due to similarities in teaching approach and timeframe within the school year. This analysis is featured in Chapter 5.

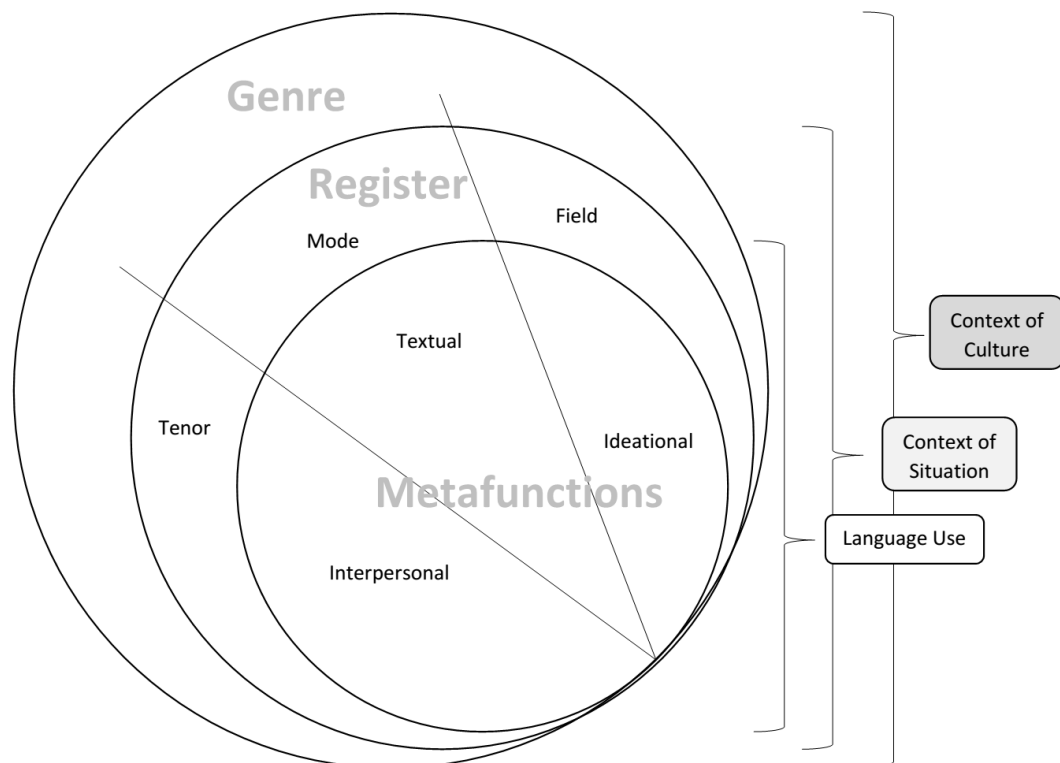


Figure 3.1. Context of Language. Adapted from Martin & Rose, 2008.

*Curriculum Genres as Analysis.* One of the most important aspects of language in a classroom is that it is designed to be a structured experience with discourse not just being an exchange of information between groups, but being a structured, planned and purposeful approach to illuminating text (Christie, 2005). The enactment of these goals are regarded as genres of classroom discourse within the classroom, which is why Christie (2005) proposed the idea of curriculum genres to describe the focus of the classroom and the reasons behind how teachers communicate their expectations to students within the structure and social practices of the classroom. This idea of curriculum genres is also informed by the definition of genre as defined by Martin & Rose (2008):

As a working definition we characterized genres as staged, goal oriented social processes. Stage, because it usually takes us more than one step to reach our goals; goal oriented because we feel frustrated if we don't accomplish the final steps; social because writers shape their texts for readers of particular kinds. (p. 6)

Although Martin & Rose are specifically talking about written texts, the form of genre extends beyond text, into spoken teacher discourse. Text is not just limited to written discourse, but also spoken. As cited previously, a text according to Halliday is:

...any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation, we shall call a text. It may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of. The important thing about the nature of a text is that, although when we write it down it looks as

though it is made of words and sentences; it is really made of meanings.

(Halliday & Hasan, 1989, p. 16)

The instances of curriculum genres are described in this research are responsive, with teachers initiating stages according to pre-planned teaching plans, expectations of students, the goals of communicating information, eliciting the production and participation of students. Curriculum genres are goal oriented, with a clear objective for students and teachers involved in this social practice. These goals include the acquisition and presentation of knowledge, the usage, demonstration and negotiation of knowledge, and accomplishment of the task. Lastly, the negotiation of the social practice with the teacher and students is a necessary component in accomplishing the goal of curriculum genres. The curriculum genres that occur within the classroom have stages that are based off of Christie's (2005) schematic stages of genres.

*Purposeful Sampling of Curriculum Genres.* For the purpose of this curriculum genre analysis, I have selected one classroom observation that is most representative and illustrative of these stages within the curriculum genres seen in each classroom. This is a purposeful sample in that these classes are held near the beginning of the school year, where more guidance from the teacher is provided, and that these classes both reference model texts (Creswell, 2008). In this research, I have classified what has been observed in the classroom discourse as four separate schematic structures under this curriculum genre of what the researcher has determined to be a curriculum genre called *Modeling Texts*. This curriculum genre is

characterized by the use of exemplary texts as a model for writing in classroom discourse. This curriculum genre both has the stages of task orientation, negotiation, deconstruction, and specification. These are operationally defined in Table 3.2. These stages were first characterized by Christie (2005), and as being parts of specific curriculum genres, such as the “morning news genre”, but in this research it is being applied to the curriculum genre observed in these classrooms to explore what moves teachers are making, with this terminology being used as a reference point. Mainly this research uses Christie’s Curriculum Genre framework to deductively identify stages of observed teaching practices, however other themes from Phase 1 emerged that have been added to enhance portions of this framework.

Table 3.2

*Detailed Description of Stages of Curriculum Genre*

CURRICULUM GENRE: Modeling Texts				
	Task Orientation	Task Specification	Task Negotiation	Task Deconstruction
Describe	During this part of the curriculum genre, the teacher orients the students to the task at hand, exercising authority as a teacher, or characterizing it as a group task. The teacher provides background, purpose of the task, background knowledge necessary and what is to be done in general terms. This is usually conducted at the beginning of the class, to orient students to the task to be completed.	During the task specification stage, the teacher specifies what is to be accomplished in the task by explicitly listing the task to be completed through the use of bullet points, guiding questions, or exemplification of details from a model text or student example text.	Typically occurring after orientation, this is when the students are given time to begin accomplishing the task in groups/pairs or individually, with teachers giving direction to students directly or indirectly, through conferencing with students, or during a classroom walk around.	This typically occurs after or during the negotiation stage, when the teacher works one on one with students to look closely at how the students are accomplishing or are attempting to accomplish the task, and the teacher is providing additional instruction such as language resources, organization, grammar or other resources used to accomplish the task.

Table 3.2 Continued

Purpose	This is to orient the students to the task to be completed, familiarize or remind students what they need to know or motivate themselves about completing the task, and to provide schema (background knowledge) for the students to complete the task.	This stage expands on the task orientation and provides more details about what the writing task is meant to accomplish, in these observations mostly accompanied by guiding questions, graphic organizers, and reference to question prompts.	This stage gives students the opportunity to implement what they have learned or been directed to do in the orientation and specification stages. This allows the students to negotiate the task with help from teachers or classmates, or work independently.	This stage gives students extra support and can be illustrative with models or teacher direction to guide students to producing language that is valued by the teacher or is appropriate to the task. This is where the teacher points out valued language usage and helps co-construct language that requires additional scaffolding.
---------	---	--	--	--



Table 3.2 Continued

Example	“Today we are going to write a letter to XXX. Do you remember why we are writing a letter? Have you ever written a letter before? I want you to think about when you wrote a letter before...”	“When we are writing this letter, remember what we want to tell the reader. What do we want to tell them? Why is it important? What information do they need to know?”	“Now I’m going to let you get started on your letter. Remember you have to tell the reader about X, Y & Z. You can work with a partner, and I’ll be going around the room if you need help”	“Look at how M— used commas to make a list: ‘Let’s make a park for the boys with slides <COMMA> tire swings <COMMA> and see-saws because that way they’ll leave the girls alone’ “
<p>Teacher Direction → Teacher/Student Negotiation → Teacher Direction/Confirmation</p> <p><i>The curriculum stages typically proceeded from left to right, from more guidance to less.</i></p>				

(Adapted from Christie, 2005)

*Metafunctions.* Functional grammar focuses on three higher level metafunctions that are going on in a given language interaction: something that is being talked about or something that is happening: known as the ideational metafunction; social relationships that are being established and maintained: known as the interpersonal metafunction; and how language is being structured: known as the textual metafunction (Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2008). Through these metafunctions, the language that is used in discourse can be deconstructed to identify critical language features and focus on how meaning is made.

**Ideational Metafunction.** The ideational metafunction is the representation of the meanings embedded in language that “construe human experience” (Halliday

& Matthiessen, 2014, p. 29). These features of language are characterized as processes (typically realized by verbs). There are a number of different types of processes that represent different types of experiences. Participants include different language resources depending on their process, such as actors and goals, typically being characterized as pronouns and/or nouns. Participants can also include adjectives depending on the process involved. Circumstances discuss the how, when and where of the clause, and these three resources form the system of *transitivity* that can be helpful in representing the experiences embedded in language. This is the aspect of *field* in the register, and is important for learners to understand how language is used when discussing certain topics, particularly in schooling contexts. For teachers of ELLs in particular, paying attention to the ideational metafunction can help to see how these experiences are communicated in discourse and specifically in writing discourse and how they are directed towards students.

Interpersonal Metafunction. The Interpersonal deals with negotiating social relationships, such as interactions and uses resources such as mood, modality and person (Christie, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2008). On the clause level, the mood system deals with the exchange of information between the speakers, through resources used for making statements, asking questions, giving commands, propositions, and making offers (Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The system of appraisal is concerned with the *tenor* register variable, as it deals specifically with how roles and relationships are directly related to the language

resources being used. Appraisal addresses language resources of engagement, which discusses language resources discussing authority, and assertion of validity of information, resources of graduation, that describe greater or lesser degrees of positivity or negativity, and the language resources of attitude that include: affect, which express emotion, judgement, that evaluates behavior or qualities, and appreciation that discusses the value and worth of actions (Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Martin & White, 2005).

Textual Metafunctions. Textual resources deal with the organization of text and speech and how information is portrayed between the speaker and listener. The textual metafunction is particularly important when moving from unorganized, oral discourse to more focused written discourse, which features more structure and strict patterns of organization (Christie & Derewianka, 2010). Teacher discourse about writing in a classroom context also relies on logical constructions of language to communicate meaning. At the clause level, the textual organization is concerned with Theme and Rheme, where the Theme is the beginning of the clause, usually the subject up until the first verb, and the Rheme is what comes after the Theme. For example, "Billy and I went to the theatre": "Billy and I" is the Theme, and "went to the theatre" is the Rheme. The Theme acts as the clue to the listener of the topic of discussion, and the Rheme contains the new information about the Theme. Analysis of the Theme & Rheme often shows us how the communication of information can be seen as the communication of old to new information, with the Theme talking about the old information, and the Rheme discussing the new information. Beyond

the clause, the Theme can show us the cohesive devices and referent chains that connect the Theme and Rheme across long stretches of discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Cohesive devices such as *it*, *that*, *this* create a link between discourse and subjects, that occur naturally in oral discourse that speed up communication, and are created meaningfully in written discourse. In discourse, personal pronouns dominate Theme, but in classroom discourse this is also accompanied by the topic of discussion, and is important that the Theme, Rheme and cohesive devices and referents be clear to the listener in order to clearly communicate.

Table 3.3

*Genre, Register and Metafunctions*

CONTEXT	CONTEXT OF CULTURE <b>Genres</b> as social processes for achieving purposes within the culture		
	CONTEXT OF SITUATION <b>Registers</b> as particular configurations of the field, tenor and mode		
	FIELD (Subject matter or topic) “What is going on”	TENOR (Roles and relationships) “Who is involved”	MODE (Organization of language) “What role is language playing?”
LANGUAGE	Ideational Metafunction	Interpersonal Metafunction	Textual Metafunction
	CLAUSE LEVEL		
	Experiential Metafunction Types of <i>processes</i> (verbs) involved in activity, <i>participants</i> and <i>goals</i> involved in these processes, and the <i>circumstances</i> in which they occur.	Language resources for interaction, such as statements, giving commands, asking questions, making offers.	The beginning (Theme) and end of a clause (Rheme)
	BEYOND THE CLAUSE		
Logical Metafunction The relationship between events (e.g. where? When? Why? How?)	Focusing on language resources that create patterns of evaluation and engagement, through appraisal resources.	Describing the cohesion of discourse through cohesive devices and referents (referential chains)	

(Adapted from Christie &amp; Derewianka, 2010)

Building on the theory of language provided by Halliday, I also argue that through observing discourse in the classroom we can see how language is being used and how knowledge is being communicated through texts in the form of structured language interactions of classroom discourse. Structuring language in a way that

allows students to learn and understand within a social experience is necessary for teachers to apprentice their learners into mastery of using the language, in the Vygotskian (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). By structuring and scaffolding to students' current abilities, this apprentices students to accomplish more than they could before. Teachers, according to Bernstein (2000), are in control of the power and responsibility of the dissemination of knowledge who can effectively (or ineffectively) transfer this knowledge through scaffolding, pedagogy and curriculum. This is done through the social practice of curriculum (Lemke, 1995). Christie (2005) argues that curriculum can be understood as genres composed of pedagogic discourse, which are structured experiences but also social experiences that are purpose driven to communicate the transfer of knowledge between social groups. As these forms of discourse unfold through the lens of SFL, the meaning making occurring in this text will be able to be observed in different and useful ways. The application of these in the classroom discourse analysis will be discussed in Chapter 4.

### **3.5 Limitations**

Due to scheduling conflicts, classroom observations were limited to six sessions per teacher (12 in total), spaced out to two concurrent sessions per month. One interview coincided with these observations, due to the convenience of scheduling for the teachers. Member checking was limited to these three sessions, with questions based on the preliminary analysis of teacher discourse, and classroom observations. Potential follow ups would include in-depth interviews

about findings from interviews, classroom observations, and classroom discourse. Inclusion of student artifacts, students discourse and student writing was outside of the scope of this research, but would strengthen the argument about the effectiveness of classroom discourse. Further potential topics of member checking would include the discussion of sensitive topics such as teachers' opinions of English-only approaches or their opinions on concepts such as subtractive bilingualism in the classroom. For instance, many of the mentions of Spanish language fluency or the importance of bilingualism was discussed in interviews and classroom observations. Potential follow ups about teacher opinion about these interactions could have provided additional context to the research.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to maintain a bracketed stance on their data, and not bring any biases or stereotypes into the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This research was approached with an open mind, observing the occurrences in the classroom and the interactions with teachers in interviews. As a graduate student doing research in the classroom, I must acknowledge the foreign presence as a researcher into the classroom, and that this also effects the observations of the classroom and behavior of teachers and students (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I attempted to minimize my presence as much as possible. With these considerations in mind, I recognize that there are unconscious biases that I have brought into the observations that I make in this research, and take full responsibility for all content written here.

Due to scheduling, a complete lesson from start to finish was not able to be observed during the classroom observations. Due to this, I focused on the curriculum genres and identifying potential stages occurring within the classroom observations, and based on six observations per teacher, I selected a curriculum genre that was most representative of the classroom stages on the whole. This selection, however, is based solely on the researchers' observations of six writing lessons per teacher. This case study included two participants, but these two had vastly different experiences as teachers, and the amount of data collected for each classroom through observations and interviews went into more depth than a similar study with a larger number of participants. The depth of the analysis contributes to the rigor of the study, but may limit the transferability due to the small data set.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

For data analysis the majority of the research has been focused on identifying themes and the patterns seen within those things. The SFL analysis will help to pinpoint types of language used in the classroom by teachers and scrutinize the language that may be used in the classroom. This case study will be concluded by including implications for practice and implications for professional development in similar schools that are small rural schools with high English language learner populations.



## CHAPTER 4. EMERGENT THEMES IN CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on the interviews and classroom observations of both teachers and is phase I of this inquiry. The themes that emerged from this data were created inductively while observing the classroom, interviewing teachers, creating field notes and memos, transcribing, studying, analyzing and coding the data through NVIVO. This chapter will organize the themes based on the influences that shaped the teaching practices of the classroom according to the data collected in observations and interviews. The analysis will include themes and codes that were produced in the analysis of the classroom discourse. These themes were created in order to address the research questions, but also took into account other salient themes that were relevant to the discussion. This research approached the data from an emergent perspective, with themes being the overarching phenomenon being described, and codes providing more descriptive details about the phenomenon.

This chapter will present my findings of the interviews and observations in according to outside influences on classroom discourse, and how this is manifested in teaching practices in the classroom related to English Language Learners (ELLs). The organization of the chapter will describe the overarching findings at first, and

then discuss the themes that were discovered under each finding. An analysis of the theme and codes will follow, with a final discussion concerning the findings of this research.

*Figure 4.1* organizes the themes that will be discussed in this chapter, as well as identifying the classroom in which the theme and code is most prevalent. Each theme and code will be discussed in the following section. *Figure 4.1* is organized by *outside influences* on the classroom, which include *ideologies* that teachers hold about teaching ELLs, and the influences of *assessments* on the decisions of teachers inside the classroom, represented by the dark circle in the center. The overlap of these circles, much like in a Venn diagram, represents the direct influence of the outside influences of ideologies or assessments on the teaching practices inside of the classroom. For example, the theme “L1 usage” is included in outside influences, under ideologies, and discusses the ideologies that teachers hold about L1 usage in the classroom, and how it influences writing discourse. The theme “good writer vs good tester” overlaps with the inside the classroom circle, which indicates that this has a more direct influence on writing instruction occurring in the classroom. The theme “differentiated instruction” overlaps with both ideologies and assessments, which shows that this theme is influenced by both of these factors.

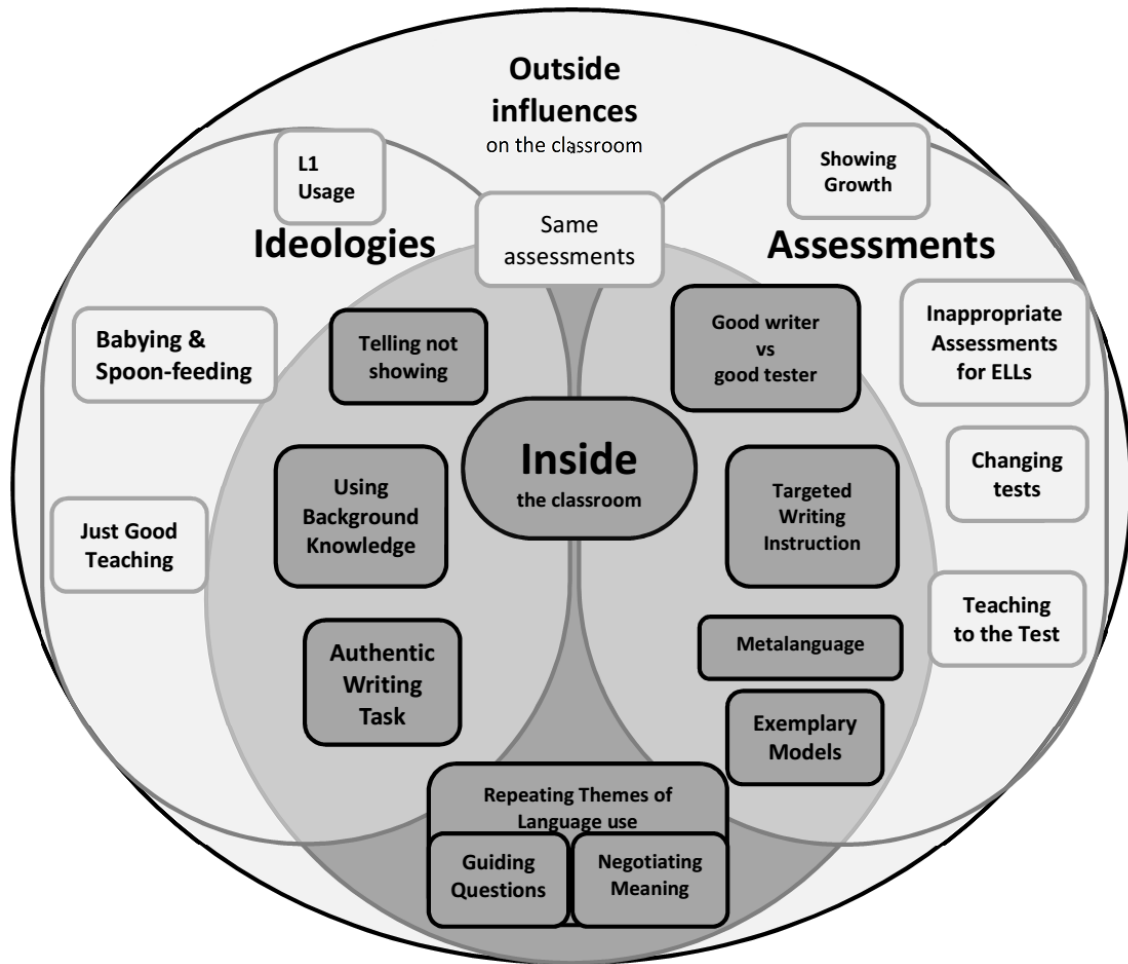


Figure 4.1. Influences on writing discourse.

## 4.2 Outside Influences on the Classroom

This chapter will first discuss the effects of outside influences on the classroom, beginning with the writing assessments that were prevalent in influencing the writing instruction of these teachers.

### 4.2.1 Writing Assessments

Writing assessments that were implemented in this school site had an effect on both teachers' discourse, and was relevant in all aspects of the classroom. This finding helps to address my first research question: "What is the nature of classroom

discourse directed at ELLs specifically concerned with writing instruction?”. This outside influence details the influence of assessments on the classroom proceedings, classroom pedagogy and the approach to writing related to English Language Learners (ELLs) and English Only (EO) students, focusing on discourse directed towards ELLs. The assessment theme is one of the more common themes that was found in the data of both the third and fifth grade teacher, came up within interviews and was often mentioned as an underlying factor in instruction, and in some cases was the most influential factor in determining instruction.

This emergent theme manifested itself in the data, and this analysis discusses the perceived effects of the assessments that students would be expected to meet in order to meet the needs of the school districts’ standardized tests and show growth in order to validate teachers effectiveness. The breadth and width of this theme addresses the perceptions of how teachers are meeting assessments, how they are shaping teachers’ instruction and pedagogy, the underlying motivations for practices in their classroom, and how these assessments are facilitating or inhibiting the teachers’ practices in reaching the needs of their ELL and EO students. Here, I will discuss the most prominent findings that emerged under this theme.

*Inappropriate Assessments for ELLs.* This finding was created due to the reactions that these teachers had in regards to the available assessments for their ELLs. These assessments were limited to summative assessments with little mention of formative assessments in the interviews, with teachers focusing on the high stakes nature of the tests in the classroom. These assessments were also said to be

inappropriate for EO students as well, but ELLs are specifically regarded by the teachers as being particularly at risk in being able to meet the expectations of the assessments. Teachers expressed the inappropriateness of the assessments, but feel limited with no viable student alternatives, or meaningful accommodations. Much of these themes overlap with the "good writer vs good tester" finding, in that teaching the students how to pass these inappropriate assessments are robbing the students of the developmental instruction that they actually need to improve their language and writing abilities. The validity of these assessments is also called into question. Many of the writing tasks that are being addressed to the students according to their teachers are not valuable or transferrable skills for their English level, such as long periods of writing or strategies being taught, as well as the order in which they are taught—these are higher level skills that should be imparted once the basics of writing have been addressed. Criticisms of the test include the nature of the writing test, in which it is required to read a passage before answering the writing prompt. According to the third grade teacher:

...their writing test has become a reading and comprehension test, so even if they are good writers you are not going to see that...my ELL kids— they can probably sit for that amount of time but ... two hours to write. This is a joke...

The length of the test was also cited as being inappropriate as well as the amount of writing expected from students, which was an important metric of success according to the teacher and previous writing tests. The fifth grade teacher

talks about the nature of the writing prompts being poor and not being “purposeful” despite the test being designed to provide students a “purposeful writing task”:

...that’s what I didn’t like about *ASSESSMENT* is the purposeful writing—what they are given to write about sometimes—it’s like really? That’s the best you can come up with? And then you see the writing...and it’s horrible...I don’t ever go back and show a kid an old *ASSESSMENT* writing ...because to me it’s worthless...I think the way that they score it and everything, it doesn’t teach purposeful writing at all...the one year that we had the best scores...they talked about standardized dress ....well my kids were all over that...they could relate to it...

There is also doubt as to whether the assessments, valid or not, can even do an adequate job of showing the growth that the teacher believes that they have made.

*Showing Growth.* This finding in the research is a continuation from the assessments and is the most important factor in having ELL students perform adequately on these tests. One of the reasons behind the push for students to achieve on the tests is the importance of being able to show growth for students in order to fulfill the No Child Left Behind Waivers and school initiated growth models (Gilmetdinova, Klassen, & Morita–Mullaney, 2014; IDOE, 2011; Wright, 2015). Teachers discuss the pressure of having to show growth in the specific areas that school accountability models use, while the improvements that teachers see in their student may not be visible or shown on the assessments. According to the third grade teacher: “We can show growth—it’s just not what they need for these tests”.

The third grade teacher in particular is aware that the students are achieving growth, but the current assessments do not reflect this. There are no alternate assessments for the third grade teacher, and claims that there no other ways to indicate growth. Although alternate assessments measures such as portfolios, visual creations and other formative approaches to assessment are recommended to teachers of ELLs, this option does not emerge as a possibility to the teachers (Gottlieb, 2006). The fifth grade teacher shows more resistance towards the implementation of assessments, due in part to her experience and realization of the constant flux of testing.

*Changing Tests.* The fifth grade teacher has a unique 25-year perspective on the history of the testing movement in the same elementary school. She remarks that “they’ve (IDOE) changed the test”. She struggles with the unknowns of the newest assessments in that she used to be able to guide the students to be prepared for the assessments, when she had a better understanding of the expectations of the tests. Although the teacher has many years of experience, the access to the testing tools that will be used to assess her students is unknown to her and has changed from years past, despite her knowledge of past State tests: “...they’ve changed everything now with what they did last year—we have no clue...” Despite the fact that these assessments are for the most part unknown, they are still used as a basis for writing prompts in the classroom. Even in the case of this experienced teacher, the importance of fulfilling the expectations of the test are emphasized, despite the disconnect she sees between the test prompts and her instruction.

*Teaching to the Test.* Concerns abound about the potential negative effects of inappropriate or invalid testing of content knowledge for ELLs (Pandya, 2011; Wright, 2015). Both teachers realize that these practices may not be beneficial for their ELL students. This theme seemed to apply mostly to the third grade teacher, as she was preparing her students for their first State assessment that is administered in third grade. The fifth grade teacher generally spoke out against the writing prompts for the assessments, expressing her dislike for them, saying “I hate them,” and that the prompts are not encouraging purposeful writing. When describing using potential approaches for ELLs, the third grade teacher characterized this within the larger goal of preparing students for the test, instead of improving their understanding.

It says to use pictures for the ELL and the special ed[ucation] which is the majority of my class. It's not helping them to the test *at all*. Are they becoming better writers because they can see details? Yes, but it doesn't matter if they're good writers if they're still failing the test.

Despite the fact that the teacher can see a change in the development of her students' writing with an increase of the use of details, even in a medium that may not be directly assessed by the test, the third grade teacher is still frustrated that this will not help the students in what is valued by the test. The teacher calls into question the validity of the assessments as well, as it is the first year that this new version of the test is being implemented:



It's a completely different process to be a good writer or to pass the test, it's not the same thing... my focus was to pass the test last year, this year we don't know what the test is. We have no idea...

The teacher focuses her instruction to procure passing test scores among her students, despite having little information about what the test contains. School wide initiatives to meet test expectations were implemented in order to help teachers attain these achievement goals. Teachers both expressed their concerns about the changing tests, and detail that their students will be judged harshly due to these assessments. Despite their frustration with state mandated assessments and how it is influencing their instruction, they acquiesce and continue to teach toward the presumed target English language arts test.

The following themes describe the themes observed that are more closely related to teacher discourse in the classroom. These themes discuss the implementation of writing strategies and the considerations made teaching writing to ELLs.

*Good Writer vs Good Tester.* This finding describes the teachers' cognitive dissonance in meeting the needs of the assessments despite their better judgement, the mismatches that they perceive in teaching towards the assessments versus what students need in their own personal development. The code subtitle "good writer vs good tester" comes from one of the teachers' interviews in which she expressed concern about what they are actually teaching their students to do – if they are teaching them how to become better writers in aspects of teaching rhetorical

strategies like supporting arguments, organization, length and conventions, or if these are being taught simply because of the requirements of the assessments. Furthermore, the third grade teacher at times cites her own teaching practices as being unhelpful or potentially harmful to writing, but is done so in order to pass the test. When discussing the preparations for students to pass a four page writing prompt which involves reading an article and responding within a limited time frame, the third grade teacher comments:

We are not teaching them to be good writers...I'm trying to prepare them for those tests but at the same time it's not helping them become better writers...I teach the six traits which is what we're supposed to do but that does not make them ready for this test. That (six traits) makes them good writers. That is two different skills.

This excerpt shows that what the teacher considers being helpful for students, but is inhibited from doing this in order to address test outcomes. For ELLs in particular, the focus on preparing them for tasks and not tests are particularly relevant. Despite the emphasis that the third grade teacher places onto the tests, she is aware of the inappropriateness of these for her ELLs. This fact was also discussed in theme inappropriate assessments.

*Targeted Writing Instruction.* This finding discusses instruction that was specifically directed at students, mostly ELL students or struggling students and how it was perceived to help these struggling students. The types of discourse that were directed towards ELLs according to what teachers mentioned in their interviews

ranged from being helpful in their writing instruction but not helpful in their tests, to taking too much time to give targeted instructions for ELLs. The third grade teacher mentioned that: “It says to use pictures for the ELLs ....are they becoming better writers because they can see details? YES, ...but it doesn’t matter if their good writers if they’re still failing the test,” but despite this statement, this use of pictures and visual story map creation, such as using visuals to represent content instead of text, was used for several classes as a planning and writing tool for ELLs and EO students. When talking about instruction targeted for ELLs, the fifth grade teacher mentioned that taking time to teach them important aspects of language, such as grammar, is effective, but that she no longer has the time to give her students this specific instructional foci.

Targeted writing instruction also occurs when the teacher is directly talking with students in group work or independent work. This is used in tandem with negotiating meaning between students and teachers, and determining what further steps need to be made to reach the desired writing goal. Much of this in the third grade classroom went back almost exclusively to the desired writing product related to the six traits, which included improving their writing according to the qualities of writing: ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions.

In the fifth grade teacher’s interview, when she talks specifically about teaching ELLs, she discusses approaching teaching grammar explicitly: “if you get them early ...and if they get the grammar their writing follows that too.” She

mentions that in the past year, she had used specific teaching tools for ELLs, including the Shurley Method© of teaching grammar. The Shurley Method relies on direct grammar instruction, featuring techniques such as jingles to teach grammar and sentence structure, designed for younger, native speakers of English (“Need Grammar Help?”, 2015). This approach to teaching ELLs allowed her to focus on aspects of language that she noticed her students struggling with the language:

...you would go through ... this sentence ...who is doing what–subject verb predicate everything like that and when they learn THAT it was amazing how good writing became for the kids who struggle with grammar and English but then of course we don’t get anymore...

However, the teacher was speaking about the approaches that she was able to use in the past, when she would have extra time to focus on language in groups after school, and due to the lack of flexibility and more emphasis on testing (prompts), she was not able to do it as much as she thought was necessary:

...with the prompts and stuff... but something like this really helps kids ... that struggle with either the grammar part or the actual understanding of the language... if you had time you could put a small group and do that and like I say I pull things from it off and on during the year...I wish I had time...

Time is cited as the biggest factor for the fifth grade teacher, while the third grade teacher, who focuses more on assessments, is afraid of the tests that students must take. In both cases, teachers are neglecting the practices that they feel are best for their ELLs due to outside factors of time and test pressure.

*Metalanguage.* During instruction, classroom discourse and within conferencing sessions, metalanguage usage was an efficient way to establish the requirements of the assignment and to make the expectations of the teacher clearer. It is important for teachers to use technical terms when discussing language and how they fit into purpose, stages and aspects of language (Brisk, 2015). Both the third and fifth grade teachers were aware of the benefit of the use of this metalanguage to some extent throughout the course of the lesson observations and interviews. When metalanguage was established and used in the classroom, students of all levels seemed to benefit from this usage.

This metalanguage was almost completely exclusive to the third grade teacher and was used both as a way of assessing writing in her classroom, and used as a way to establish goals for improvement in writing, and to show individual student growth in the classroom environment. The following section discusses the metalanguage used in the third grade classroom. The fifth grade teacher had very few instances of metalanguage usage. There was a word wall in the classroom titled purple words, but these had only 5 scientific terms posted, and stayed static through the course of the observations. Only one instance of the metalanguage used in the school (purple words) was observed throughout the entire observation.

Throughout the observation, use of metalanguage such as *details* or *purple words* were used as a way to communicate to students the importance of the use of descriptive vocabulary in their comprehension, their reading but most prominently, in their writing. The Purple words strategy is part of Smekens Education Solutions,

which is used in this school site, and is described as a way to show students what is “strong word choice” in writing (“Got Purple Words?”, 2015). The use of the metalanguage included terms: purple words, details, “strong” word choice, use of mnemonic devices (such as COPS, C- Capital Letters, O- Overall appearance, P- Punctuation, S- Spell your best), items in a series, and various other metalanguage for subjects like math and science. This use of metalanguage is part of the classroom decorations and teacher created materials, and features of writing that are constantly reinforced by the teacher in order to provide her students with clear directions of what to produce in their writing. The third grade teacher also used the six traits (Spandel, 2001, 2005) in order to provide students with an established metalanguage and resources to improve their writing, which is directly related to the assessments used within this classroom. The teacher graded these on a five point scale for each separate writing assignment, and indicated what area students could focus on improvement on based on past assessments.

Many visual prompts were created for the classroom based on these six traits, and the school corporation relied on the usage of the six traits for the grading of all writing assignments for third grade. There were multiple instances of the Six Traits of writing visible within the classroom, and these materials included prompts created by the teacher and professionally designed posters.

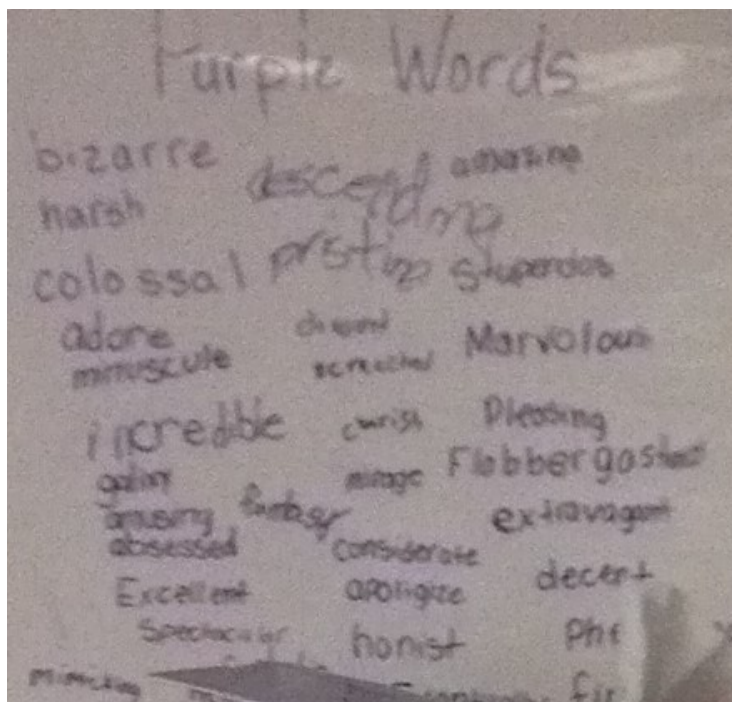


Figure 4.2. Purple Words List. Purple words listed left to right, from top to bottom: bizarre, harsh, colossal, adore, miniscule, incredible, amusing, obsessed, Excellent, spectacular, mimicking, descending, pristine, diamond, screeched (screeched), curisly (grisly), mirage, fantasy, considerate, apoligize (apologize), honist (honest), amazing, stupendos (stupendous), marvolous (marvelous), pleasing, flabbergasted, extravagant, decent.

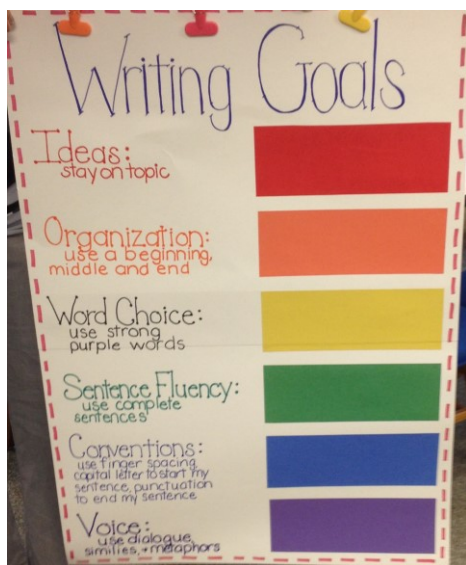


Figure 4.3. Six Traits Based Writing Goals created by the third grade teacher based on Spandel, 2006.

The third grade teacher would often talk about each trait of writing specifically, citing the six traits and ways of fulfilling this with phrases directly citing posters in the classroom, and other materials. In classroom discourse, phrases like “What did she just do there? Items in a series...that was really good right? Yeah she made a list...did she use commas right?” would be heard, that were specifically referencing elements of organization that students were creating. Purple words would be selected by a student volunteer during reading activities, such as those featured in *Figure 4.2: Purple Words List*. These purple words would be written down by the student on the board (in this case poster paper), and after the story was finished, the teacher would ask to talk about which purple words the student found and give brief explanations or context about its usage.

This usage of metalanguage in the classroom and in the writing discourse gave the teacher a way of focusing on specific aspects of the students’ writing, with definitions provided for each of these traits. Within the classroom discourse observed, these manifestations of the six traits were not always explicit or given solid representations for each student, or they were represented by a single use of organization, ideas or voice. Word lists of potential “purple words” to be used in a specific writing prompt were a very useful practice that the use of metalanguage helped to facilitate. This metalanguage provided a helpful shortcut for students to understand more easily elements of writing that can be improved through the revision process. Most useful is the metalanguage that this affords her in the classroom, allowing students to have a greater idea of what elements of writing



need improvement. Although the descriptions of each of the six traits are text based, this is more helpful than an abstraction of these terms. The effectiveness for ELLs could be improved in a number of different ways, such as the use of visuals, and examples of good language usage in model texts.

*Exemplary Models.* The use of exemplary models was used in both the third and fifth grade classrooms. In the third grade classroom the use of exemplary models included reading texts before writing, examples from outside of the classroom, like the use of example essays featured in the six traits provided by *Smekins Education*, or examples created by students. The use of the Smekins examples were not seen in these classroom observations, instead the use of student examples was seen instead. The texts read before the writing assignments did not seem to have a direct correlation to the writing task. For example, before the writing task about writing a letter to the principal about the new playground, the text that was read was *Room on a Broom*, which does not share a common topic, vocabulary, genre or purpose. However, the task of the classroom observation featuring exemplary texts was a review and editing of the letter draft, so it is very possible that the brainstorming activity was preceded by a story directly relevant to the letter writing genre.

The use of exemplary models in the classroom was somewhat contentious, in that the teacher was conflicted in the use of exemplary models, if they are true representations of what the students can produce at that level, or they are a way of highlighting possible solutions to writing problems:

...Smekins—their examples—like when they show third grade, it's going to be better than (High Level ELL) and [he] is one of my top writers...it's like that's not even realistic...I want someone to show up with [Low Level ELL] and tell me what to do or show up with [Mid Level EO] and show me this big mess like how do we fix this? ...it's more like this is what your third grade students should look like in a perfect world...

In the classroom, student exemplar texts were used as models of writing that highlighted both exemplary use of language and issues to resolve in writing. This was a point where the teacher would ask the class “Where is something that they could make one improvement?”, and often refers back to the six traits as a way to characterize any improvement made in the writing task.

The use of exemplary texts in the fifth grade classroom was limited mostly to either textbook or teacher generated samples in the classroom. The teacher felt that students need to decide for themselves what they need to write, and this is reflected in the use of exemplary writing: “I try to guide but I don't give answers about anything because that's not learning ...but I told them when I just tell you what to write down that's not learning.” Although she claims to not give answers, she does provide “specific examples” of how the task can be accomplished, through the use of the sample essays or textbook examples.

In the example later shown and discussed in Chapter 5, the teacher provides the example of a student's life in China according to a former teacher at Eagleland elementary school. This is an example written by a teacher, from a teachers'

perspective. The text is not read completely by the whole class, only the first excerpt, and students are expected to read the rest and fill in graphic organizers based on this. The ways that the teacher makes use of examples in the classroom are to provide ways that students can take samples from the exemplary model and potentially use in their own writing. This potential use if not made explicit however.

[teacher reading text] *students get to eat at 7:05 and have 25 minutes to eat.*

*Rice is a staple of their breakfast along with protein...remember last week vocabulary word was a staple– what is a staple when we’re talking about food? What’s a staple? ...The things that we always have right? Something that is always in the diet. We talked about staples last week? We talked about how they work...the classes are 45 minutes long here. They will have either Chinese, math, English class, physical education or art...So once again think about our school day–think about what they do, see how they compare...*

The excerpts from these essays are showing how the teacher had accomplished the goals of these writing tasks. It should be noted that these activities preceded the planning stage of the writing task, where students filled in graphic organizers. When the students reached the writing phase, the teacher continuously refers back to the model text, but not in specific terms about how to achieve this task in their own writing:

...you’ve got your paper on China–if you need an example of a difference, go back and read it, it’s right there... what you’ve also got it listed on there, if

you need more help with an idea, GO BACK AND READ IT... I think there was some really interesting information in the China piece that we talked about that you guys talked about so that's what you're going to be working on right now...you are going to be working on getting that stuff written IF you get it done, I will look at it and I will tell you what you need to tweak...

The teacher does use the model texts as the exemplary text, but does not offer much more guidance than this. We can also see the influence of process, in that the teacher is the final authority in this piece, being the final arbiter of the success of this compare and contrast piece, despite the potential for an audience beyond her.

These excerpts from the classroom discourse shows us that there are models for students to use, but these examples are often static and outside of the experience of the students. These are not so much examples as they are hints about what is possible in creating these essays for students. This phenomenon is also seen in the "Telling not Showing" finding under teacher ideologies.

The use of exemplary models can be very helpful in the classroom, and we can see that the use of this is paramount in the writing classroom. Both teachers understand the importance, and we can see how their underlying ideologies they both hold are reflected in how model texts are actually utilized in the classroom. The importance of these examples being relevant to students' experiences can be seen, and the importance of student owned language in the classroom discourse of writing. These excerpts of writing discourse can show us the type of scaffolding teachers are

providing in writing, and how they provide guidance for the production of academic writing in their classrooms.

The influence of writing assessments on the teaching pedagogy of these teachers has shaped their practices towards writing practices and ELLs. Teacher ideologies about ELLs and approaches to teaching writing were also crucial findings from this research.

#### **4.2.2 Teacher Ideologies**

These findings are related to teacher ideologies about the teaching of writing to ELL students, and how this is reflected in teaching practices in the classroom. This outside influence details the influence of ideologies on the classroom proceedings, classroom pedagogy and the approach to writing related to ELLs and EO students, focusing on discourse directed towards ELLs. These are mainly concerned with how teacher beliefs about writing and ELLs influence the teaching approaches concerning writing.

These themes address the perceptions of how teachers are determining and meeting student needs, how they are shaping teachers' instruction and pedagogy, and how these ideologies are facilitating or inhibiting the teachers' practices in reaching the needs of their ELL and EO students. This helps to address my second research question, "How are current teaching practices supporting ELLs' writing and linguistic development?" Here I will discuss the most prominent findings that emerged under this theme.

*L1 Usage.* The usage of the L1 (students' first language) in the classroom has a long history as a tool for content area learning and English language development (Brisk, 2015; Gibbons, 2009; Fu, 2009). L1 usage within the classroom can potentially provide greater gains and help to bridge linguistic gaps while emphasizing the usage of the target language (L2) (Fu, 2009; Orteiemer–Hooper, 2013). The dominant language of both classrooms was Spanish, but little Spanish language usage visible or seen in classrooms.

Teachers seemed to be reluctant to allow the students the freedom to produce language in their L1 due to fears that students may over rely on their L1 and not use English, or may use the L1 for informal student conversation or to avoid responsibility, because “they don’t want you to know what they are saying because they are not doing what they should be doing.” The fifth grade teacher did not talk much about the use of the L1 besides the occasional use of Spanish in the classroom: “every once in a while there might be something that would come out in Spanish, probably one person and they will respond but it’s short—it’s not like conversation anymore...” The teacher has mentioned that in the past, there was more use of Spanish that could be heard within the school, but was eventually discouraged:

when they first came here it was conversation, and we just kind of put it out there that—I mean I respect the fact that that is their language but you’re in English you got speak English, and you don’t even have to tell them that anymore.

For the fifth grade teacher, the rules about using languages besides Spanish are clear: “The rule is as soon as I hear it is like UH UH,” and no further intervention is needed: “it would have to be something that you have to stop all the time—NOW you don’t...they speak English.” Even though the use of the L1 can be helpful for ELLs in the classroom, the assumption is that the use of the L1 could potentially be used to undermine the progress of English, therefore it is better to restrict its use in the classroom.

The third grade teacher is aware of the limited English of some of her students, and the limited Spanish of her students: “the kids are not fluent in Spanish or in English, so that’s very strange ...they only speak Spanish at home, so they come here and speak English during the day...”. She also talks about specific students having difficulties speaking in the classroom, and how other students speak (in English) for the student:

...I think she is nervous about the way that she sounds, so she doesn’t speak much in the classroom, and when I try to call on her the other kids speak for her which makes me nuts, because they’ve done that for the past three years for her, so they are going to continue to talk for her...

Despite the fact that the teacher is aware of the issue here, during the class observations, when this phenomenon occurred, the teacher did not seem to want to take the extra time to negotiate meaning with the student and let them use their own words, but regressed to having another student (high level EO) speak for her,

instead of having her make the effort, or have another ELL act as a language resource.

While the third grade teacher does not see the students' L1 in the same way as the fifth grade teacher does, the third grade teacher does not seem to interpret the option of having students use their L1 in the classroom, despite the presence of many high level ELLs that could assist the low level ELLs. As could be seen by observations of the school, the usage of the L1 in instruction and in fulfilling the expectations of assignments did not have to be completely in English. This could have been negotiable—the English Only practice that was tentatively in place in each of these classrooms could have been changed or more L1 language usage could have been implemented depending on the needs of the students and the willingness of the teachers to create a more inclusive language environment with use of the L1 as a tool.

*Just Good Teaching.* This finding deals with the data that had been seen in the classroom in which the teachers believed that the ELLs in the classroom would benefit from diversified instruction, just like the other students in the classroom benefit from diversified instruction. In other words, the needs of their ELL and EO students were similar enough that they would not need to make any additional efforts to provide different types of diversified instruction thus providing equal instruction to each student. Teachers who believe that just good teaching (de Jong & Harper, 2005) will neglect the areas that ELLs need in order to be successful in learning, such as instruction that includes both language and content simultaneously,



and realizing that there is a potential gap in language and content understanding for ELLs, or other language difficulties or gaps in prior knowledge, among other issues. For the third grade teacher, she had interpreted that the levels of her EO students were the same as that of her ELL students—that the needs of both of her students groups were the same with the same needs: “there is nothing more that my ELL kids need that the White kids [or English-speaking students] don’t....my accommodations are across-the-board—it’s for all of them—they need that help.” These across the board accommodations includes reading tasks based on their reading level “my kids who read at a third grade level...are reading a third grade chapter book,” but when pressed, could not come up with much in the way of how she differentiates for any students. She had connected the practice of writing with reading which is shown to be beneficial for EO students (Calkins, 1996) but for ELL students, additional resources and guidance is needed.

The conceptualization of the different needs of ELL students is undeveloped for these teachers as well. The third grade teacher perceives her ELL students to be “on the same playing field” as her EO students, and not having any particular gaps or differences in their abilities as writers, as they have had the same education as the EO students in their schooling. The teachers need to be more sensitive to the fact that the same education does not necessarily mean that it is equitable education or that students have the same access to education.

The fifth grade teacher is similar in her perception of the needs of her ELL students, in that she does not perceive their needs as being any different from the

EO students in her classroom. She provides visuals but mentions that she does this for all students who are “visual learners” especially when approaching the field of mathematics. She does allude to the fact that not all students have the same background and must provide additional information for these students in the forms of diversifying instruction for some students, especially concerning writing. Differentiated instruction refers to the efforts put forth by the teacher to respond to variance among learners in the classroom (Tomlinson, 2000). For ELLs, differentiated instruction can take different forms in order to fill the potential gap between comprehension and production of writing. ELL specialists advocate for the use of alternate forms of writing such as the use of the L1 in writing, use of portfolios, transitioning from scribbling to writing, or the use of visuals in writing assignments (Gibbons, 2006; Samway, 2006). Differentiated instruction was characterized by the teacher’s interpretation of teaching that was unique for groups of students that had unique or specialized needs. At times, the needs of ELLs and EOs overlapped with each other according to the perceptions of teachers, which has been problematized by ELL educators (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Harper & de Jong, 2004).

When teachers do diversify instruction for ELLs, they justify this as not doing so because of their different language backgrounds or developing language, but because EO students need the same instruction. The differentiation that occurs is characterized by being something that they show reluctance in doing, or skeptical in the effectiveness of the implementation of it.

The third grade teacher had difficulty in describing how she differentiated instruction for her ELL students, but did mention that she made special arrangements for her students such as placing students in similar reading groups with similar language backgrounds for her Spanish speaking students with similar reading levels, as well as for math instruction, but for writing the teacher felt that differentiation for writing would be much more difficult.

The most meaningful differentiation for teachers was the use of visuals for their students. The fifth grade teacher was aware of the fact that most ELL students need differentiated instruction, and additional resources in order for them to gain access to the same material as their EO students. In the past, when they had first started at Eagleland school, the fifth grade teacher was able to receive math books in the L1 of the students that she was teaching, and commented that “it was nice that they could stay right with us” throughout the lessons due to the availability of the native language. The teacher still seemed to subscribe to the idea that math transcends language to some extent: “...it’s the math they can do, it’s just the content...” and despite this, the Spanish language text books did provide assistance to these students. The fifth grade teacher again talks about the past, when students had first come over, and were presumably first generation immigrants, who had had prior educational experience with academic language in their L1. The fifth grade teacher also noted that the use of diversification of instruction for her students would be helpful for students that “...don’t have the background” of the lesson, in the context of a writing lesson/assignment, but mentions that she already diversifies

instruction for her students in math classes, mainly for those students who “...are visual learners.”

In this finding, the justification of how teachers diversified instruction was observed, including the reasoning of the potential pitfalls in diversifying instruction and admitting when they do not know how to diversify instruction in certain scenarios. There is a large degree of romanticizing and nostalgia about how diversified instruction was utilized in the past for the more experienced fifth grade teacher, and it is unclear as to how different her teaching approaches actually were. The effects of the adoption of new educational measures and the overwhelming weight put behind the writing prompts for teachers has created pressure to give the most useful instruction to pass the assessments to groups of students with very different backgrounds. The perception of diversified instruction is characterized as being patronizing, unproductive, or at unneeded, since both groups are in need of similar assistance. This ideology is also observed in the “babying and spoon-feeding” finding.

*Babying and Spoon-feeding.* This finding discusses the impression that teachers have in the usage of differentiated instruction specifically for ELLs that they feel to be unnecessary or not beneficial for their students’ development. Much of this is based in the necessity of preparing their ELL students for assessments and providing them with equal opportunities the same as their EO students. The irony of course here is that teachers may not recognize the need for different instruction in

order to prepare them for the same task, but that there are many methods to achieve the same learning trajectories.

Both teachers talked about their opinion of the use of differentiated instruction with their ELLs. The third grade teacher had mentioned that she found that the usage of visuals in the teaching of ELLs were very helpful, particularly for the students who were struggling the most, but also said in the same breath that:

...it helps in some way and may hinder them in another...I haven't made them think about their own details without showing them the details...so I feel like I'm spoon feeding them the details with the pictures...but their writing is better with it...but they don't APPLY it to the next skill...

The reason behind the doubt in that this differentiated instruction will help the students is that providing this special instruction (providing visuals that accompany a story with a story map) will not help them on a "bare text" which is what students will be prompted with on the assessments.

The fifth grade teacher had claimed to have a good idea of what students had been capable of in the past, over her long career of teaching ELLs and seeing how they have progressed over time, and described her past students in a positive light, retrospectively:

...you know I been here since the first kids walked through the door... when they were first coming through...every parent wanted them to have an education, and if you called a parent about anything, it was taken care of,

and they were on it and was really kind of fun, because you saw such growth...

The belief that students avoid hard work because of difficulty in understanding, or lack of dedication is present. The teacher believes that if she does not apply the same pressures to all of her students, then the students will take advantage of this leniency to perform to less than their ability:

...some kids have learned that people will back off and leave us alone...they are finding out...I just want them to learn I want them to be successful and be able to do those things because I know how important it is...

For example, the WIDA ELD (English Language Development) standards (WIDA Consortium, 2012) are newly established standards for ELLs in this school district, and the implementation of the WIDA can-do descriptors for her students who have “been here a long time” is another way for the other teachers and system to “baby them a little bit longer,” further reinforcing the idea that the students who have spent long periods of time in the states no longer need additional assistance, and in fact are harmful to treat them differently than their EO counterparts. She does go on to say that providing these students these accommodations may have been more beneficial for students in the past, and this is essentially babying them too much. For students at this level, “language is not so much a barrier anymore.” This shows the lack of distinction between social and academic language, and myths perpetuated by many teachers that have ELLs in their classrooms.

Although the teachers are gradually preparing the students for the assessments, there seems to be the impression that any additional accommodations for their ELLs that EOs are not receiving, is providing support that they will be unable to transfer to the testing tasks. These scaffolds that are put in place could help to bridge the gaps for their ELLs, but it the impression is that it is too little, too late.

*Telling not Showing.* This finding explores the phenomenon that occurred mainly in the fifth grade teachers' lecture to the students about what is required in the assignment through mainly spoken discourse, but does not follow up with visuals, written examples, expanding on how to use graphic organizers to represent this, or neglects other means of following up on the task in question. The teacher can often be found making reference to subjects and referring nouns which may be unclear to students, in which case detailed explanations would provide more guidance for students. This excerpt is from a lecture preparing students to read through a model text of Chinese students' school day, and she used this as a model to compare their school day:

...you are going to ... underline *things, things* that are alike and different *things* like that...If I ask you—like I say if we were going to write the day in the life of a fifth—grader...what would you be telling the kids in China? About what your day is like? you don't just say we come to school we go home we have lots of homework right ? that wouldn't describe anything, you've got to have some details in there, you've got to be specific...maybe there is *things—* like I say you done other times you have schools where you find out— like

you have several years ago when *technology* was just coming in...and in Indiana some schools didn't even have a *computer*, and our school had all kinds of *computers*. it's just *things* like that...

In this instance the teacher is expecting students to produce details in their writing, first by noticing the language usage in the model text, and then providing details, similar to what is used in the model text. This is not explicitly stated, and not illustrated through the lecture, or visuals, such as whiteboard usage or graphic novels. Expressing expectations in non-specific terms such as *things* and *technology* can cause confusion on how students can accomplish the task being described by the teacher.

In interviews, the teacher makes a point that the desired writing task should feature different vocabulary than what she has been observing, but she does not model this expectation in her lessons. Even though the teacher says that she “talks about (vocabulary) all the time,” there was little evidence in the classroom that the use of academic vocabulary was modeled or given much, if any scaffolding for her ELL students. The teacher references the importance of using academic language in college applications, job documents and in students' futures, but the reality of this is not made explicit to students. For instance no contrast of a strong introduction like in a letter or essay is compared with a weak introduction in the classroom discourse observed. In light of the fact that there were six observations, this claim cannot be completed justified, but if this were a common practice, this would have been evident from even the short time I was in the classroom for observations.



*Using Background Knowledge (Schema).* Addressing the division between ELL background knowledge and EO background knowledge (schema) is one of the biggest challenges for teachers of ELLs and their academic success in writing. Schema was a concept proposed by Piaget, that discussed the concept of background or prior knowledge that helps to characterize the world and create new knowledge (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). For example, the word “house” might conjure up an image of a one story house, with wood floors, windows and a roof, but for others, it might evoke an apartment in a high rise complex. This is one of the reasons why the use of schema can be complex when teaching ELLs or students from different cultures. One of the key approaches when teaching ELLs in particular is the activation of background knowledge and the ability to use this background knowledge when fulfilling the tasks outlined by the teacher and during their preparation periods (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Tracey & Morrow, 2012). When utilizing the prior knowledge of ELLs’ it is important not only to review the content, but also the language requirements. Activating background knowledge is not only determining what students already know about the topic, but making deeper connections to students’ experiences, cultures, traditions and backgrounds (Uribe, 2008). Activating background knowledge when engaging in forms of literacy are vital since students make sense of reading and writing through their current linguistic knowledge, and for the case of ELLs, this includes all of their linguistic knowledge of their L1 and L2, which can be very different from mainstream U.S school culture and their EO counterparts (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Uribe, 2008). Teachers often assume

that ELLs who have spent long amounts of time in the American classroom have become “Americanized,” and share experiences and background knowledge similar to EO students, despite the difference in language and family backgrounds. No matter how long ELLs have been in the American school system, teachers cannot assume that their ELL students have the same background knowledge as EO students, and the difference in knowledge and interpretation of school culture and the world in general may create discrepancies in performance between EOs and ELLs. Therefore, activating background knowledge for ELLs requires more detailed and explicit outlining of desired elements that teachers want to see in reading and writing, and consider the expected writing outcome of their students.

For the third grade teacher, the activation of background knowledge is an important one for all of her students, and does make her best effort to activate the background knowledge for her students in conferences and in the classroom. In order to facilitate this, the teacher gives a review before instruction, such as reviewing concepts to be discussed in the lesson (i.e. opinion vs fact). These are excellent ways to review previously learned concepts, but in order to activate additional resources of the background knowledge of students, it is important to connect these concepts to experiences as well. The teacher brings up examples that are contingent on her own experience and the experience of her EO students, but rarely brings up background knowledge that may be of particular significance for her ELL students. This finding did not occur much in the third grade teacher data,

showing that activation of background knowledge based on the specific experience EO and EL students did not occur on a regular basis in the observed classrooms.

The fifth grade teacher is aware of the effectiveness of activating background knowledge for her students and discusses its importance during interviews and refers to the schema of her students in her classroom as well. The fifth grade teacher once again shows her experience and her awareness of best practices in the classroom. She mentions that for her students she has to “remind them of what they know” in order to prompt them about problem solving approaches, using strategies like “what you need to know” in order to activate schema and refer back to previous issues that had been addressed in the classroom. During her classroom instruction, in the introduction of the writing task stage, the teacher frames the discussion of the task in terms of previous activities, such as during the writing task of comparing the school day in China to the school day at Eagleland, and referring to students’ own experiences at Eagleland when writing about the differences between the two school systems. However, this activation of schema is done briefly, and without visual details or detailed explanation, which is discussed under the finding “Telling not showing.” According to interviews with the fifth grade teacher, in the past, she had claimed that some of the most effective approaches for her ELL students included activating the background knowledge of ELLs in the math classroom with the use of Spanish language math text books. Students, in this case, who had prior experience with math literacy, referred to this background knowledge to facilitate

English math literacy. These same practices could be used for writing, by utilizing visual cues for writing, in order to provide background for ELL students:

...it could be drawings or things like that and sometimes even with writing the kids like a visual kind of thing so we could be writing on some kind of genre of writing or whatever or some kids just don't have the background so you give them things to look at or read that gives them the background...

During writing tasks, the classroom teacher makes effort to connect writing tasks to students' backgrounds, to relate it to students' experience:

...I try to find something in the background depending on what it is...and we did that writing stuff and we as a group talked about (the school district benchmark) and we tried to keep it relative...and I tried to get somewhere to like the Hispanic kids would be writing at some point--would they get to pull their culture in?...

This conversation did occur when the teacher was discussing the usage of video for the school corporation which was based on a writing task concerning sunfish, which is a topic that would be difficult to involve the students' culture and background, as commented by the teacher. The teacher also realizes that in the future, she would like to improve her instruction through the inclusion of topics that are relative to EL students, in order to improve their writing and relevance to their lives and writing:

...I think part of it would be even just going to the topics ...if they come from Mexico ... topics that would be relative to them... that would make it easier for them to maybe, get the flowing of the writing because they know about it

and things like that because everything that we do is integrated here kind of thing, I think that would be helpful...

As the fifth grade teacher has mentioned, it is important to consider the different backgrounds that each student comes from, and not make blanket statements about students' backgrounds. Giving students the opportunities to use their L1 and cultural knowledge in their writing tasks would provide them a way of adapting their experience to their writing in a meaningful, productive way in the classroom. However, teachers do not utilize much of the students' backgrounds in the observed writing tasks due to factors such as the assessments, or the teacher being unfamiliar with the students' backgrounds. Teachers may not be aware of the effectiveness of the use of the students background knowledge, which may be the case for the third grade teacher, which may explain the absence of its usage.

More meaningful elicitation of background knowledge for students such as events in life or individual accomplishments would be helpful in the adaptation of background knowledge for ELLs. Background knowledge is not limited to simply mentioning past activities or having students recall experiences relevant to the writing task, but using this schema in different ways and referencing their prior experiences as a basis for writing (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

*Authentic Writing Task.* This finding was established for elements of classroom discourse that supported students' writing by having them write about authentic writing tasks that are directly related to students' experience or writing tasks that have some real life analog for students that they have experienced in the

past, in the classroom or in their real lives (Graves, 1994; Van Sluys, 2010). This is important in the teaching of writing, that students write tasks that are authentic to their experiences and that teachers offer tasks that are not outside of their experience.

In the course of the 3rd grade teacher's writing classes, the writing tasks included: "Your favorite weather?, What did you do? What was the weather like? and How did your day end?", which was, according to the teacher, "not a great prompt" but was part of the assessments in the classroom. Other prompts included "writing a letter to the principal about a new playground," which was a prompt shared by other 3rd grade classes, and was accompanied by outlining and modeling of a successful first draft of a student text. Another prompt had students write a problem/solution piece with visuals. Although the 3rd grade teacher seems to want to utilize more authentic writing tasks in her classroom and prompts created by the teacher (which were the case for the playground prompt and problem/solution prompt), as the school year went on, she had to teach to more and more inauthentic prompts, such as the weather one mentioned above.

For the 5th grade teacher, authentic writing tasks that discussed students' experience included a compare and contrast piece that began with a reading from a former teacher's description of the daily routine of students in Eagleland's sister school located in China, in which there have been a history of exchange between the schools. For the 5th grade teacher, having students engage in writing and real authentic writing tasks is important, and she is "always trying to find other things in

writing that will make them excited ...to find something cool and different that they get into.” She mentioned that some of the best writing was produced when topics were relevant to students, such as a debate about the pros and cons of standardized dress in schools. For inauthentic tasks, such as corporation mandated tasks, the teacher supplements these with videos: for the writing prompt about an “underwater scuba adventure” that most students had no way of having previous experience with, the teacher provides a video to give students a visual image of the scenario. Unfortunately, this was not accompanied with additional language resources to support academic explanations and usage of academic language with the students for this prompt.

Authentic writing tasks are one of the ways that teachers can use their students’ experiences and create more meaningful writing tasks that students can use their existing language resources in writing. However, due to the use of prompts in reaction to, or directly mandated by assessments, teachers are forced to use prompts that they do not feel would be effective with their students.

The following themes are influenced by both the outside influences of teacher ideologies and the pressure of the assessments on the approaches of the teachers.

*Same Assessments.* This finding discusses the opinions of teachers that notice the potential mismatch between tests designed for ELL students and for EO students. Teachers are aware of the backgrounds of their ELLs, and the fact that despite their differences in abilities, the assessments in place cannot account for these

differences, the assessment system in place in the classroom does not account for all variation or that the accommodations in place are not adequate or appropriate for the ELL students. Despite their approach to teaching writing, the status of the assessments does not change and the concern is reflected in the data coded here.

The underlying justification for the actions of not differentiating instruction for students is that both student groups will be subjected to the same assessments.

According to the third grade teacher:

...I don't differentiate for ELL versus my other students for writing because when it comes to the test they all have to do the same thing without accommodations – there is not an accommodation for writing, and as far as differentiating for them—maybe more vocabulary help, but at this stage they all need vocabulary. There is nothing more that my ELL kids need that the White kids don't or English-speaking students... so I guess my accommodations are across-the-board – it's for all of them they need that help...

In this case, the reasoning for the lack of diversification of writing instruction is justified by the assessments, and that provision of the same instruction is needed since all students are in need of the same areas of improvement. The ultimate goal—the assessments—is what dictates the instruction for the students, despite what the teachers believe is best for their ELL students.



The types of language use in the classroom were coded according to common patterns of use in the classroom. These were used to guide students in completing tasks, and are also related to teacher ideologies and assessments.

#### **4.2.3 Repeating Themes of Language Use**

Repeated themes of language use were seen within classroom observations that occurred regularly to elicit desired written performances from students. The use of questions in was a way of modeling desired writing performance from students. This extended to how teachers encouraged or reacted to the use of student questions in the classroom.

*Guiding Questions.* This finding was characterized by the use of questions in guiding students in directing them in their writing. The fifth grade teacher used guiding questions extensively in her teaching. In an interview the fifth grade teacher talked about the use of these questions as a way to promote student independence by allowing students to come to their own conclusions. “I am one of these– I try to guide but I don’t give answers about anything, because that’s not learning...” This approach can be seen throughout all of the introductory sections of the writing lessons, where the teacher introduces the topic and then discusses possible approaches to answering the prompt through questions. Guiding questions are used and their rationale is described by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in this way.

...if you are going to describe a day as a fifth–grader at Eagleland... what happens? What is the day like? What kind of things go on? What do you do?

You know what you want to focus in on...The start of the day—I want to see what goes on DURING the day—Lunch—what is lunch like?...

Instead of providing explicit instructions to students what to produce in their writing, the guiding questions act as hints for the students to produce written language independently. This finding shows that the teacher wishes students to perform their own writing without being spoon-fed, and works within the principle of students self-elevating their own abilities and self-improvement in writing. This finding shares a lot of overlap with “telling not showing” seen above, where the teacher tells the students what they want to see, but without providing examples or visual aids.

*Negotiating Meaning.* In this finding, the importance of negotiating meaning (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005) and ELL questions are in the teaching style of the third grade teacher and was observed and emergent within interviews. Negotiating meaning refers to the process in which students negotiate to understand to be understood through speaking and listening. The third grade teacher has a population of ELLs that are advanced in their English proficiency, but continue to struggle with language, both spoken and written. Due to the perceived limitations of her ELLs, this creates an imbalance in communication between the teacher and students, which shifts the responsibility of clarifying information on the ELLs who are not as vocal as EO students. The third grade teacher had mentioned that one of the biggest differences between students that excelled and students that struggled was the ability to clarify and ask the teacher when there were difficulties in understanding.

For the students that did not actively negotiate meaning with the teacher, she had to guess when to provide clarification:

I think my higher ELL kids...[they] will question EVERYTHING all day long when [they] doesn't understand... I think that's why [they are] a stronger students because [they] will ASK...the other kids I'm GUESSING when they do not know because they do not always ask--[they] will not talk and [they] will not ask me for help on anything...

When ELL students ask questions in the third grade classroom, the teacher does take the time to make sure that students understand what is being said, and works one on one with the student and/or provides visuals or demonstrations for the students. Students who are obviously struggling, but are not vocal, are not served until the teacher has time to address these difficulties. In several instances when she was working in a small writing group with low level ELLs, more proficient ELLs consistently interrupted her and their needs were attended to immediately.

In the fifth grade classroom the teacher lectured consistently, with few opportunities for students to negotiate meaning with each other and with her. Due to this difference in teaching style, students' raising hands and directly asking the teacher was not a common occurrence. Despite this, students found it necessary to clarify instructions or goals of instruction. The importance of this finding is that students who asked questions were primarily level four ELL students, clarifying about the goal of the assignment. Since much of the discourse discussing the task was limited to the spoken domain, ELLs had trouble determining assignment

expectations. Some of the teacher expectations did not seem to be made clear to the ELLs, such as the practice of taking notes, which had been mentioned by the teacher in the act of creating a list of items comparing and contrasting the difference between Chinese and American schools. A graphic organizer had been distributed for use with this assignment, but there were no models of list creation, no blackboard instruction or classroom visuals to help prompt and assign students in note taking/list making. In this classroom, instruction of important points was done so with guiding questions, orally. This meant that only high level students were able to proactively negotiate meaning in this classroom.

The teacher does not welcome clarifications that are requested by students. When a student asks for clarification (“I don’t get it”), the teacher acts somewhat frustrated by the question and lists how to compare and contrast the two schools orally—“you don’t get what?...you are comparing them...they start school before 6 o’clock—do we start school before six o’clock?...that would be a way that the Chinese school is different than the American school”. Students also seemed to be confused about fulfilling the answers to the questions, and what resources were available to them. For a midterm writing prompt, a student asked about using a previously read text that was directly related to the prompt, and was unsure whether or not to use text evidence in this case. “Textual evidence” was not heard often in this classroom and not emphasized as a great importance in the midterm writing prompt, which may have confused students as to whether or not outside knowledge could be used for that prompt, or any prompt in the future.

The students in these classrooms, are being forced to take control of their learning (something the fifth grade teacher mentions as well), and negotiate meaning with the teacher, in these teacher led classrooms. The students, therefore, must have the speaking proficiency to be able to produce this language, understand what aspects of the lecture they do not understand, and be able to adequately negotiate meaning with the teacher. This can lead to low level ELLs being eclipsed in the classroom, which is exactly what is happening in the third grade teachers' classroom. Teachers need to be able to not only provide students the opportunity to negotiate meaning, but also scaffold students' understanding through multiple means of communicating information through visuals, interaction with other students, and facilitating greater interaction with the teacher and the task.

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

The findings from this chapter based on the interviews and classroom observations of these two teachers have shown that there are a number of outside influences on the teaching approaches that occur within the classroom, specifically concerned with writing instruction of ELLs. In this chapter, there has been direct evidence that shows that the effects of teacher ideologies, the effects of the intrusion of assessments, their beliefs about language learners and their past experiences, and their awareness of the linguistic needs of their ELLs students as well as the difficulty in meeting these needs. Teachers are aware of the need for changes in teaching discourse for their ELLs, and are aware of the differences in experiences, linguistic knowledge and difficulties that may exist. However, these

factors, combined with outside factors, make it difficult for teachers to consider at all times. Teachers see their practices as serving all of their students, but due to the lack of specialized knowledge, or the fear that they may not be able to serve the community well, they will delegate these responsibilities to others, or simply not address specialized needs.

The outside influence of assessments is seen as troublesome, but both third and fifth grade teachers acquiesce to teaching according to the tests. Although the teachers are fairly reluctant to the usage of assessments throughout their classrooms, they offer very little resistance to implementing teaching to the test despite the probability of their students being unable to pass the tests, despite the best efforts of the teachers and the students. Test-oriented teaching is a condition found in classrooms that are focused solely on achieving the goals set out by assessments, which leads to curriculum narrowing (King & Zucker, 2005). This effectively reduces classroom instruction to lessons or content that is directly related to teaching to the test, which results in an opportunity cost of students learning a broader set of skills or a variety of lessons compared to curriculum developed by the teacher. This also creates an environment in the classroom in which the teacher is constantly pressured to “show growth” which can be heard repeatedly throughout classroom instruction and interviews.

In this case, these teachers are relinquishing authority as a default position to acquiesce to the assessments despite their reported ineffectiveness of determining the strengths of their students. The assessment focus is placed on the ultimate

summative tests that occur intermittently throughout the year, and have the highest stakes. Formative assessment is not discussed. If teachers were able to take a more formative approach to testing, and use these to determine the growth of their ELL students, they would be able to show growth and meet the needs of assessments on their terms. Teachers are aware of the inappropriateness of the usage of summative assessments only, but despite their expertise, still acquiesce to summative assessments being the sole driver of their instructional choices in writing.

Through this analysis, we can see the pedagogical practices that are occurring in the classroom, such as the use of language of the teachers, the influence of assessments and ideologies, and how teachers are supporting their ELLs. The implementation of summative testing of ELLs impacts not only the school site in this research, but is found in all schools in this district, making this analysis relevant beyond the bounds of this study. The ideologies of these teachers are limited to this site, but districts with teachers of similar ideologies may experience implications of teacher similar to those observed in this study. By considering these findings, we can better understand the situations of teachers in rural districts, and help to better meet the needs of their ELL students.

## CHAPTER 5. SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC CLASSROOM DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In Chapter 5, we will take a closer look at the types of language being used by the teacher following an SFL approach to look at spoken language use of the teacher. Before this, I will quickly recap our findings in Chapter 4, and briefly review the methodology employed for this language analysis.

Chapter 4 explored the practices of the teachers in their classrooms, their organization and their rationales behind their practices in discussing writing discourse in the classroom for their ELLs. This employed a holistic view of the influences on the teaching practices of the two teachers and how this affected writing discourse occurred in their classrooms.

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to look at the discourse of both teachers on a smaller scale, with the use of a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) classroom discourse approach, modeled after Christie's Curriculum Genres (2005), which is nested in the larger framework of SFL. I will focus specifically on the curriculum genres the teachers are performing. More simply, curriculum genres examine the schematic structures, in other words the stages or steps, of the classroom discourse. The classroom genres being observed in this research are model writing genres, and this analysis will examine the types of language used in each stage of this genre.



### 5.1 Curriculum Genre & Stages: Tasks of Language

According to Christie (2005), one of the most important aspects of language usage in a classroom is that the discourse is designed to be a structured, planned and a purposeful exchange of meaning. The fulfillment of these goals are regarded as genres of classroom discourse to describe the focus of the classroom and illustrate how teachers communicate their expectations to students within the structure and social practices of the classroom. This idea of curriculum genres is also informed by the definition of genre as defined by Martin & Rose (2008):

As a working definition we characterized genres as staged, goal oriented social processes. Staged, because it usually takes us more than one step to reach our goals; goal oriented because we feel frustrated if we don't accomplish the final steps; social because writers shape their texts for readers of particular kinds. (p.6)

Although Martin & Rose are specifically talking about written texts, the form of genre extends beyond written text, and can apply to spoken discourse as well. Curriculum genres are goal oriented, with a clear path for students and teachers involved in this social practice. These goals include acquisition and presentation of knowledge, usage, demonstration, and negotiation of knowledge, and accomplishment of the goal. Lastly, social practice with the teacher is a necessary component. Teachers can negotiate the writing task with their students or have their students individually negotiate the writing task. This focuses on the differences between working collaboratively, teacher to student, or working individually.

For the purpose of this analysis, I have selected one classroom observation to analyze from each participating teacher. This is a purposeful sample, in that these are representative of the teachers' discourse styles, and do not vary greatly from classroom. Both classroom observations occurred at the same time of year at the beginning of my inquiry. Both observations have the same goals of modeling writing, but have different stages and approaches. This classroom genre: modeling writing, presents an exemplary writing sample, in which the teacher uses classroom discourse to express the expectations of the writing task.

## **5.2 Stages: Task Orientation, Negotiation, Deconstruction, Specification**

In this research, I have classified what has been observed in the classroom as four separate schematic structures under this curriculum genre of modeling writing: Task orientation, task specification, task negotiation and task deconstruction. These were first characterized by Christie (2005), and as being parts of specific curriculum genres, such as the "morning news genre," but in this research it is being applied to this research scenario, to explore what moves teachers are making in their classrooms, with this terminology being used as a reference point.

I will operationally define the stages of each of these stages as have been observed in these classrooms. The following table describes the stages observed in the curriculum genres. While I use Christie's (2005) Curriculum Genres framework to deductively identify stages occurring in this research, these stages described are inspired by Christie's framework, but include details that are unique to this research. Table 5.1 provides a list of typical features of the stage as well as providing more

detailed descriptions, purpose and examples of the types of discourse that occur in these stages. This table is based off on what was observed in the classroom observations, using Christie's framework (2005).

Table 5.1

*Curriculum Genre*

<b>CURRICULUM GENRE: Modeling Texts</b>				
STAGES	Task Orientation	Task Specification	Task Negotiation	Task Deconstruction
	Teacher Direction →		Teacher/Student Negotiation →	Teacher Direction & Confirmation
Typical Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Beginning of Lesson,</li> <li>▪ topic intro,</li> <li>▪ background knowledge activation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Listing tasks to be completed,</li> <li>▪ graphic organizers,</li> <li>▪ planning of writing task,</li> <li>▪ student strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ group or independent work,</li> <li>▪ interactive teacher support,</li> <li>▪ conferencing,</li> <li>▪ workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detailed language analysis,</li> <li>▪ examples of task completion,</li> <li>▪ explicit language instruction,</li> <li>▪ writing demonstrations</li> </ul>

Table 5.1 Continued

Description	<p>During this part of the curriculum genre, the teacher orients the students to the task at hand, exercising authority as a teacher, or characterizing it as a group task. The teacher provides background, purpose of the task, background knowledge necessary and what is to be done in general. This is usually conducted at the beginning of the class, or task to be completed.</p>	<p>During the task specification stage of the curriculum genre, the teacher specifies what is to be accomplished in the task by explicitly listing the task to be completed through the use of bullet points, guiding questions, or exemplification of details from a model text or student example text.</p>	<p>Typically occurring after orientation, this is when the students are given time to begin accomplishing the task in groups/pairs or individually, with teachers giving direction to students directly or indirectly, through conferencing with students, or during a classroom walk around.</p>	<p>This typically occurs after or during the negotiation stage, when the teacher works one on one with students to look closely at how the students are accomplishing or are attempting to accomplish the task, and the teacher is providing additional instruction such as language resources, organization, grammar or other resources used to accomplish the task.</p>
Purpose	<p>This is to orient the students to the task to be completed, familiarize or remind students what they need to know or motivate themselves about completing the task, and to provide schema (background knowledge) for the students to complete the task.</p>	<p>This stage expands on the task orientation and provides more details about what the writing task is meant to accomplish, in these observations mostly accompanied by guiding questions, graphic organizers, and reference to question prompts.</p>	<p>This stage gives students the opportunity to implement what they have learned or been directed to do in the orientation and specification stages. This allows the students to negotiate the task with help from teachers or classmates, or work independently.</p>	<p>This stage gives students extra support and can be illustrative with models or teacher direction to guide students to producing language that is valued by the teacher or is appropriate to the task. This is where the teacher points out valued language usage and helps co-construct language that requires additional scaffolding.</p>

Table 5.1 Continued

Example	<p>“Today we are going to write a letter to XXX. Do you remember why we are writing a letter? Have you ever written a letter before? I want you to think about when you wrote a letter before...”</p>	<p>“When we are writing this letter, remember what we want to tell the reader. What do we want to tell them? Why is it important? What information do they need to know?”</p>	<p>“Now I’m going to let you get started on your letter. Remember you have to tell the reader about X, Y &amp; Z. You can work with a partner, and I’ll be going around the room if you need help”</p>	<p>“Look at how Jeff used commas to make a list: ‘Let’s make a park for the boys with slides &lt;COMMA&gt; tire swings &lt;COMMA&gt; and see-saws because that way they’ll leave the girls alone’ “</p>
---------	---	---	--	---

A traditional classroom lesson might proceed with introduction of the writing topic (Task Orientation), description of the expectations of the topic and writing task (Task Specification), providing specific details about what is expected and how to perform the task through, graphic organizers and examples, group or independent work strategies (Task Specification & Negotiation), and conclusion and wrapping up or providing additional support to students, paying particular attention to showing how the task was accomplished (Task Deconstruction). These stages are conceptualized as first providing students support and context for the task, modeling and then providing support, and then providing confirmation of successful negotiation of the task or re-orientation/further negotiation of the task. This represents a gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student (Fisher & Frey, 2007). The following section will review the metafunctions of language used in the analysis of classroom discourse, viewed through a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach to language.

### 5.3 Metafunctions: Functions of Language

In SFL theory, there are three big claims that are made in discussing the nature of language. First, both spoken and written language is organized in a way that can be classified into metafunctions. Metafunctions are the language functions that illustrate how meaning making is constructed between student, teacher and text. Secondly, language is a series of options in meaning making, which occurs within a system of language. Third, the meaning making and choices are dependent on the context and text in which they occur (Christie, 2005; Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2008). In this analysis, I am concerned with all of these functions, in particular the choices that the teacher is making within the system of classroom discourse in relation to the goals of teaching writing to her students, and in the context and text in which they occur (Christie, 2005). In this analysis, I will examine how each of these stages are characterized through their usage of language, focusing on the expectations of the teacher and how this is characterized. There are also other resources that are part of the SFL toolbox that will be helpful in this analysis, and I will operationally define all of these in the following section.

The purpose behind looking at these aspects of language detailed through SFL is the ability to scrutinize the discourse of the teachers and examine how meaning making is happening and to determine patterns of language within this discourse and discovering potential promising practices and extensions of this discourse that could be improved for ELLs.

### 5.3.1 Textual Metafunction

The textual metafunction will provide us ways of discussing the organization of the teachers' talk and help to identify how the teacher is expressing teaching authority or collaborative approaches, the organization of new and old information. The beginning of the clause is the Theme, which establishes the beginning of the sentence, and develops the topic of discourse (Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The Rheme provides new information to the listener by the speaker. This analysis will separate the clauses into Theme and Rheme. With these tools, this portrayal of the responsibility and how teachers orient and direct students to completing tasks were one of the biggest findings. Collaboration with the students is established through the usage of collective pronouns in the Theme position, such as *we*, and *us*, indicating that the teacher is going to help or guide the students through a lesson or task. Student responsibility, however, is established through individual or directed pronouns such as *you* in the Theme position, which was found to be used when talking about expectations of the task or assignment. Based on this phenomenon, Theme and Rheme will be discussed in the context of collective and student responsibility, seen in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

#### *Collective & Student Responsibility*

	Theme	Rheme
Collective Responsibility	<i>we</i>	are going to look at an example today
	<i>let's</i>	look at this story together
Student Responsibility	<i>You</i>	are going to write a letter today
	<i>Your group</i>	is going to brainstorm some ideas

Related to the textual metafunction that discusses the organization of clauses, I will also discuss cohesion of information, going into detail about cohesive devices and referents (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), and how classroom discourse makes use of this information. Cohesive devices and referents refer to links between subjects and the progression of information from one clause to the next in Table 5.3. Although speech can be unorganized and chaotic, speakers still tend to include clear Themes and Rhemes within speech, especially formalized speech that occurs within a classroom. Therefore, the textual metafunction, while not as useful as analysis of written discourse, is still illustrative of the emphasis that is being placed on the students' writing tasks. Cohesive devices and referents will be marked with corresponding numbers in superscript, as it becomes relevant in each metafunction. Cohesive devices usually take the form of pronouns such as *it*, *that*, *they*, *them*. Referents are the original words that the cohesive devices are indicating featured in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3  
*Cohesive Devices (it, this time) & Referents (school day, at eight)*

Theme	Rheme
Last week, we	talked about the school day <sup>1</sup> .
It <sup>1</sup>	starts at eight <sup>2</sup> every day.
At this time <sup>2</sup> , students	have breakfast



### 5.3.2 Interpersonal Metafunction

For the analysis of the interpersonal metafunction, this analysis will focus on the use of WH- and Y/N interrogative questions within the classroom discourse, as well as types of questions, focusing on information request questions, which are part of the mood system of the interpersonal metafunction. This will help us to understand what the semantic purpose of the interactions behind the asking of questions in the classroom. The types of questions that will be analyzed are information requests, where the exchange of information is the purpose of the question, such as “Who wrote ‘The Bostonians’” (Egins, 1994, p. 149). For this analysis, these questions will be categorized into two types: information request–showing, and information request–leading as seen in Table 5.4 and Table 5.5. These categories are iterative, based on what has been observed in this research. Both information requests have similar lexicogrammatical structures, but the difference is how the teacher provides the opportunity to respond to these questions.

Table 5.4

*Information Request: Showing*

Information Request: Showing	
Teacher Initiation	Who wrote “The Cat in the Hat?”
Student response	Mandatory: Teacher provides time for students to answer S: Dr. Seuss
Orienting students to same task: Task completion as a group response	

Table 5.5

*Information Request: Leading*

Information Request: Leading	
Teacher Initiation	Who wrote "Cat in the Hat?" What was it about?
Student Response	Optional/Unsaid: Teacher does not provide time for students to answer
Relying on students to provide their own information: Task completion as an individual task	

Information requests typically require responses from students, but in some cases, these information requests do not require a response from students, within the mode of the classroom lecture. The typical response that would be elicited from students is imagined to be completed by the student independently, and not vocalized due to the formal nature of the classroom, or the atmosphere fostered by the teacher.

This analysis will also categorize the types of questions, between WH-Interrogatives and Yes/No interrogatives. According to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014, p. 143), Yes/No (Y/N) interrogatives are polar questions, and WH-interrogatives are requests for information. Y/N interrogatives have limited responses, and often the response from students is not required in classroom discourse. These questions offer very little opportunity for output from students, and are typically designed for students to answer chorally, without much thought. Table 5.6 shows examples of yes/no interrogatives.

Table 5.6

*Yes/No Interrogatives*

Theme	Rheme
could you	tell me the answer?
have you	told me the answer?
did you	tell me that?
didn't it	answer the question?
shall I	tell you the answer?
are they	answering the question?

(Adapted from Halliday &amp; Matthiessen, 2014, p. 102)

WH- Interrogative questions are typically characterized as being content questions, which interrogative words being featured in the Theme position of the question. These questions elicit information from students, and are designed to give students more opportunities to elaborate on information that they know, and help provide guidance to other students in the classroom. Table 5.7 shows examples of WH- interrogatives.

Table 5.7

*WH-Interrogatives*

Theme	Rheme
Who	can tell me the answer?
Where	did you find the answer?
How many	questions did you answer?
How long	did it take to finish?
What	is difficult about the question?
Why	couldn't you finish the test?

(Adapted from Halliday &amp; Matthiessen, 2014, p. 102)

These interrogative questions will be the basis of the interpersonal analysis. However, the semantic meaning may differ from the lexicogrammatical structure in the course of classroom discourse. This analysis will look at the questions used by

the teachers, and explore the semantic purpose behind these questions according to the classroom discourse observed.

### 5.3.3 Ideational Metafunction

The ideational metafunction explores a number of different elements, in which the elements we will be focusing on in this research are material processes, participants, and goals that are communicated to the students. In material processes, participants refer to the actors involved in the clause/discourse. Goals refer to the target of the clause, or the purpose of the clause such as: “We are going to write a letter.” Table 5.8 provides additional information about material processes.

Table 5.8  
*Interpersonal Processes*

Ideational Metafunction Processes	Definition	Example
Material	Doings and happenings occurring in the real world: changing; doing, acting; happening, creating.	Please <i>write</i> about... You have to <i>read</i> ...

(Adapted from Christie & Derewianka, 2010, p. 9; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 216)

The use of language in expressing the expectations of writing are made through the types of strategies that students are expected to use through the use of processes, which are usually realized in grammar with verbs, and take on a number of different types (Christie & Derewianka, 2010; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). These materials processes are the “goings–on” in language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 213), and are how the expectations and goals of language are expressed in this discourse. As writing becomes more and more complex, the language used to

express the “goings–on” in language become more specialized, harder to interpret in classroom discourse, and difficult to use within writing contexts. If teachers rely solely on discourse (speaking) to provide students with writing direction, it is important to examine how they are making meaning with how their students are expected to interpret it.

Table 5.9

*Metafunctions Summary*

Language metafunctions	Textual	Interpersonal	Ideational
Description	The textual metafunction will organize statements into <b>Theme</b> and <b>Rheme</b> , focusing on <b>Collective Responsibility</b> and <b>Student Responsibility</b> and illustrate the usage of <b>cohesive devices</b> and <b>referents</b> throughout the excerpt.	The interpersonal will examine the use of <b>WH</b> and <b>Yes/No Interrogatives</b> used in the classroom discourse to mediate the exchange of information in relation to the writing task.	The ideational will be concerned with the <b>Material Process</b> and the accompanying <b>Participants</b> and <b>Goals</b>
Purpose	Identify the flow of information and how the teacher is directing students’ attention to the classroom discourse, and the importance of these elements.	Identify how the teacher is communicating information through questions and the semantic meaning being achieved in these questions.	Identify the types of processes being used in classroom discourse and describe how these processes are being directed towards students in regard to writing discourse.
Resources	<b>Theme &amp; Rheme, Collective &amp; Student Responsibility, Cohesive devices &amp; Referents</b>	<b>WH– &amp; Yes/No– Interrogatives, Information Requests: Showing &amp; Leading</b>	<b>Material Processes, Participants, Goals</b>

#### **5.4 Importance of Discourse Analysis for English Language Learners**

This framework is helpful in highlighting the language use of teachers with English Language Learners (ELLs) in their classrooms in helping teachers become more mindful of the types of language resources that they are using within the classroom. ELLs do not always have the same access to writing abilities that their native speaking cohorts have (Rose & Martin, 2012), and that they may be as much as 3 years behind (Halliday, 1964 as cited by Christie, 2005) in their writing abilities. Therefore the students may have experience with the same use of language that is references by the teachers may misinterpret or misunderstand language, what is required of students in their writing, and the language resources that are being utilized by the teacher. Therefore it is the responsibility of the teacher to make clear the language resources being used, what is meant by the language processes used, the referent of the cohesive devices, the responsibility of the students and teachers and what is expected of each, and how the task being described can be accomplished according to classroom discourse. My primary interest is how the teacher gives students the resources they need before writing (building the field) for her students and orients students to accomplishing the writing task (Gibbons, 2002). How they do this through the noticing of exemplary elements of the text is of primary importance and the motivation behind this analysis.

The textual metafunction helps us to see how the teacher is characterizing the tasks, whether the teacher is emphasizing her authority, specifically discussing the responsibilities of her students, or relating the information in a logical fashion that

students can follow, and the usage of cohesion by the teacher, so examine possible disconnects in referents and their *cohesive devices*. This information is often difficult for English Language learners (ELLs) to understand and scrutinization of the usage of cohesive devices can be helpful in having teachers think about their language usage (Christie & Derewianka, 2010).

The interpersonal metafunction shows us how the teacher is negotiating meaning with the students through the use of questions. Since this is one of the most common ways for the teacher to communicate with ELLs through classroom discourse, it is of utmost concern that this be clear and meaningful for ELLs.

The ideational metafunction shows us how the teacher is characterizing what is happening in writing and what should be accomplished within writing through processes, who is engaged in writing and what they are accomplishing through participants and what the outcomes should be through goals. For ELLs, the specialized language contained in processes are what they are expected to produce, and should be modeled through discourse.

The above resources will be used for the language analysis of classroom observation excerpts from both teachers. There will be a brief explanation providing the context of the discourse to be analyzed. The language analysis will feature the stage of the curriculum genre (Task Orientation, Negotiation, Specification or Deconstruction), and then will show the excerpt from transcribed discourse. A transcription legend is located in the appendix. The metafunctional analysis will follow this. This will be organized by Textual, Interpersonal, and then Ideational

Metafunctions. A description of what is observed and what SFL language resources that are salient in each stage and metafunction will be described after each section. At the end of each teacher's excerpt, a recap description will be provided of each metafunction. In conclusion, the implications of this language analysis will be discussed.

## **5.5 Third Grade Teacher Language Analysis**

### **5.5.1 Task Orientation 1**

In the opening of this task orientation, the teacher has the students sitting at desks, in groups of four or five sitting at desks bunched together. The teacher is standing in front of the classroom, with an overhead projector (OHP) and a pencil in hand, and directs students to look at a students' writing sample. This activity is described as a review of a writing prompt that was conducted a week previously. The teacher selects a few exemplary student texts from the collection to put on the OHP as exemplars. The text in question is a response to a prompt, in which the students write a letter to the principal asking to provide ideas about a playground to be built on the school.



Table 5.10

*Task Orientation 1*

[Teacher stands at the front of the classroom, with an OHP and a whiteboard, with students sitting at their desks in the classroom.]

T: Okay last week on Tuesday we did our 55 minute writing prompt = Yes= you remember?

You got to write a...

Ss: <<Letter!>>

T: A letter to your principal about a new...

Ss: <<Playground>>

T: PLAYGROUND= and guess what.

You have some really awesome writers in here, so we are going to look at THREE. that were PRETTY GOOD.

They had some great things that we want to look at that maybe YOU can do in your writing next time, THEN, we're going to talk about rewriting our own, from beginning, a middle, an end

So we are going to rewrite one yourself= but let's look at some good examples first. Electrician lights please.

...

[Teacher rustling through papers ]

*Dear principal*—here it is.

[Teacher reads question prompt]

oh boy=your principal was thinking about building a NEW ... playground, and needs YOUR ideas...

*Textual Metafunction.* Collaboration with the students is established through the usage of *We* in this task orientation, indicating that the teacher is going to help the students in this walkthrough of the model text. Typically, this is located in the Theme position of the clause that shows that during the orientation stage, this will be a group activity. When the teacher talks about writing specifically, be it the model text or what the students will go on to produce or rewrite, the Theme shifts between *we* and *you/your*, with *you* and *your* firmly placing the responsibility of the

completion of the task with the students. This move from a collaborative to an individual task is signaled when the teacher moves from a task in which the teacher will provide scaffolding for students and work together with them (Table 5.11), and the move to student responsibility is reserved for talking to students about what they have accomplished in the past, and to indicate what the teacher expects them to accomplish in this current task (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11

*Task Orientation 1 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Collective Responsibility	we	are going to look at THREE
	we	want to look at
	we're	going to talk about rewriting
	our own	from beginning, a middle, an end
	we	are going to rewrite one
	but let's	look at some good examples
Student Responsibility	Yes = you	remember?
	You	got to write a letter
	that maybe YOU	can do
	in your	writing next time
	You	have some really awesome writers
	needs your	ideas

This use of discourse by the teacher to characterize student responsibility and group responsibility in the classroom shows how the teacher plans to guide and direct students towards completing this writing task as a whole class. This occurs within the curriculum orientation of this task, and indicates to students that this task will be guided, and reviewed as a class, but also describes what will be required of the students in this writing task.

The cohesive devices in this discourse sample show us the flow of information throughout this orientation stage in Table 5.12. Emphasized language resources are communicated through the cohesive devices: *three that were pretty good, they*. The original referent, the prompt of the assignment, the letter to the principal about a new playground is represented by 1, with the student model texts referring to 1a.

Table 5.12

*Task Orientation 1 Cohesive Devices*

Theme	Rheme
You got to write	a letter <sup>1</sup>
we are going to look at	three <sup>1</sup>
	that were pretty good <sup>1a</sup>
They <sup>1a</sup>	had some great things that we want to look at...

There are few cohesive devices used, which helps to keep the goals clear in this orientation stage. The teacher continues to talk about the letter, and refers to the three letters that the class will discuss. The cohesive devices here have clear referents, and the flow of information easy to follow.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* In the beginning task orientation stage, the teacher uses few questions, and is mostly using these questions to lead the students to recall their prior knowledge about this topic featured in Table 5.13. These information requests don't allot any time for students to answer or provide any information, so these are intended to provide further orientation to the task.

Table 5.13

*Task Orientation 1 Interpersonal Metafunction*

	Type of Question	Question
Information Request: Leading	Y/N	you remember?
	WH	guess what?

These questions are acting as leading questions, to help students to activate background knowledge. Further, it is paired with eliciting statements from the students, to orient them to the writing task.

*Ideational Metafunction.* With the ideational metafunction, we can see how the teacher is using participants, processes and goals to characterize the expectations of students in the orientation stage. In the main section of this discourse, the orientation shows the features the material processes of writing, and looking at the goals of this class, being the exemplary letters, which relational processes paired with participants, *we*, describing what the class is going to do in the next stage. The goals in this discourse show the tasks to be completed in this class and the future: writing a letter, looking at three good texts, and revisions made in rewriting the students' own texts. These are stated by the teacher in this task orientation stage.

Table 5.14

*Task Orientation 1 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
You got to	write	a letter
we are going to	look at	three that were pretty good
that maybe YOU	can do	in your writing (next time)
THEN we're going to talk about	rewriting	our own

What can be seen from this first instance of text orientation is that the teacher is characterizing the entire orientation with material processes, characterizing students as being the producers of writing. The thematic analysis shows that the task is being characterized with both collective responsibility and student responsibility, focusing on what the students have accomplished thus far, what the teacher will help to clarify, and what they are expected to do in the future. The teacher is working with the students to study an exemplary text and working together to point out exemplary language and constructions in the story: “*we are going to look at...*,” and begin the process of rewriting together: “*we're going to talk about rewriting our own.*” However, when discussing the past and future task, the language in the Theme is directed towards the students, with the responsibility lying with them:

...You have some really awesome writers in here...

...that maybe you can do in your writing...

...needs your ideas...

Students in this textual orientation are being oriented towards a whole class activity, with an emphasis on group work and working together on a task with the teacher,

with the responsibility not reserved exclusively for the teacher, but for the entire group, with the ultimate responsibility in the lap of the students.

The interpersonal and ideational metafunctions are also working to orient the students towards the future task. The information requests are leading students to recall their prior knowledge of the task, and the ideational sets forth the goals to be achieved and the material processes describe what doings and happenings will occur in the course of this class. These language resources are clearly orienting the students to the task at hand, which is helping to construct the discourse of this curriculum genre.

### **5.5.2 Task Specification 1**

This next stage in the curriculum genre is the task specification. The teacher moves to the model text that is on the OHP, and begins to talk about how the student accomplished this task. In this first Task Specification, the teacher emphasizes the responsibilities of the students through the Themes of interpersonal and Ideational clauses, in order to accentuate the importance of the role of the student and their agency. This helps to establish students' sense of agency in their writing and how they can perform similarly to the model text. The teacher is also modeling the thought process of the model text and offering different strategies through the use of different processes that the student performed in order to achieve the task through the material processes: underlined, numbered, marked up, and reread. The teacher is now working through the student text, pointing out the language used in the model text by pointing to it with a red pen, but not marking it.

Table 5.15

*Task Specification 1*

[The teacher moves from orientating the students attention about the topic to the actual task that the teacher wants the students to accomplish]

T: Look she UNDERLINED that, oh she must've thought that was important.

[student has underlined "Equipment" from the prompt "What equipment would you like to have on the new playground?"]

*tell him or her what EQUIPMENT you would like to have on the new playground  
INCLUDE IN YOUR WRITING=LOOK AT THIS,*

She numbered where they were going,

And I checked them off because I graded

Did she reread this more than once=does it look like she did?

Ss: <<Yeah>>

T: So ...what did she do?

Ss: <<Marked up the text>>

T: SHE MARKED UP THE TEXT=that's right she is evaluating what she has to do.

[Teacher reads question prompts]

WHY is it important to have a new playground?

WHAT equipment would you like to have on the new playground?

And WHY would you want this new equipment?

So let's read this.

Okay?=It's not perfect, but it's a GREAT START

so let's look at this one

it has a title...BUT what was it supposed to be?

Ss: <<Letter >>

T: it's supposed to be a letter. Okay?

*Textual Metafunction.* By looking at the textual metafunction in Table 5.16, it can be observed that the teacher is accentuating what the student has done in her writing, and is highlighting what she has done in the Rheme, highlighting the processes that she has used to accomplish her writing goal. The Thematic position of the student's actions with the repetition of the use of she, show the student's

agency and responsibility in the creation of this model text, and is a way of exemplifying the strategies used in the writing, and in the student's thought process.

Table 5.16

*Task Specification 1 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Student Responsibilities	Look she	UNDERLINED that,
	oh she	must've thought that was important
	She	numbered where they were going,
	Did she	reread this more than once
	what did she	do?
	SHE	MARKED UP THE TEXT
	what she	has to do

Through the textual analysis, we can see the agency that the teacher is giving to this student through the strategies that she has listed in the Rheme position. This is made more obvious through the ideational metafunction, by looking at material processes. The use of questions is also of note, as are the cohesive devices, which are becoming more complex.

The use of cohesive devices is shown here again in an important part of highlighting how the students can fulfill the task. Here, the teacher is highlighting part of the sentence on the OHP, but unless students can clearly see the OHP, what the teacher is actually highlighting is that the student underlined parts of the prompt as a strategy to complete this task. The teacher highlights these elements of writing that are important for students, but only does so with cohesive devices: *she underlined that, she must've thought that was important*, so we can see that some students may have difficulty in identifying what exactly is important, if they cannot



read or see the OHP, and the teacher does not vocalize this in the classroom discourse. The next cohesive device comes before the referent: *she is evaluating what she has to do*. The proximity and details provided by the teacher make this clear for students that the task refers to the prompts themselves.

Table 5.17

*Task Specification 1 Cohesive Devices*

Theme	Rheme
Look she	UNDERLINED that <sup>1</sup> ,
oh she	must've thought that <sup>1</sup> was important
she is evaluating	what <sup>2</sup>
she	has to do <sup>2</sup>
	WHY is it important to have a new playground? <sup>2</sup>
	WHAT equipment would you like to have on the new playground? <sup>2</sup>
	And WHY would you want this new equipment? <sup>2</sup>

During the task specification stage, it is important to specify with as much detail as possible the means of accomplishing the task, particularly when referring to exemplary strategies in specifying how to achieve the task.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* We can see the use of information requests in this instance of the interpersonal function, with the teacher allowing students to answer, specifying what the writer of the exemplary text has done, and should've done in their writing. We can see here, that the teacher is showing to all students what to focus on: she did reread, she did mark up the text, and she was supposed to write a letter. Through this, the teacher specifies how to accomplish the task.

Table 5.18

*Task Specification 1 Interpersonal Metafunction*

	Type of Question	Question
Information Request: Showing	Y/N	Did she reread this more than once... does it look like she did?
	WH	what did she do?
	WH	it has a title.. BUT what was it supposed to be?
Information Request: Leading (Part of prompt)	WH	WHY is it important to have a new playground?
	WH	WHAT equipment would you like to have on the new playground?
	WH	And WHY would you want this new equipment?

The teacher relies on students' chorally spoken responses to confirm understanding of this which includes only the more proficient ELLs.

*Ideational Metafunction.* We can see that the teacher is listing a number of promising practices that the student is using in her writing through material processes: *underline, numbered, reread, marked up*. The highlighting of these processes can show the students how to achieve the goals of the writing prompt and how these processes are materialized in writing. In this case, since the teacher is specifying what should be accomplished in the writing task, the language resources being used here are representing the specific strategies being shown on the OHP.

Table 5.19

*Task Specification 1 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	MATERIAL Processes	Goals
(look) she	UNDERLINED	that,
... She	numbered	where they were going...
...Did she	reread	this (more than once)...?
SHE	MARKED UP	THE TEXT

The underlining, numbering and marking up of a text is relatively easy to demonstrate and point out in a model text, but without teaching these skills explicitly it is unreasonable to expect students to fulfill this expectation. The explicit teaching of these material processes, and highlighting their use in planning and review stages of the writing process and specification stage is of particular importance.

In this specification stage, the teacher is using these metafunctions to specify what the model text accomplished, what will have to be answered in the writing, and strategies and actions that can be used throughout the task. Some instances of the discourse used here, such as how to accomplish strategies, or what the model writer had accomplished may be difficult to interpret for some ELLs without additional information and scaffolding.

### **5.5.3 Task Negotiation 1**

In this task negotiation, the teacher is reading through the text with the students, highlighting parts of the writing task that were useful for the writer, but mainly is reading through the text, without much emphasis on how the student is achieving this. The teacher is also seen to be negotiating the meaning of some of the

text with the students, and asking students genuine questions about the text. Further into the text, the teacher poses additional questions making references to the vocabulary in the text: “Are those good description words? Did she use that word pretty good? So you think a boy or a girl wrote this?” These are not genuine questions, as they are designed to bring attention to elements of the writing that listed details, and the use of vocabulary.

Table 5.20

*Task Negotiation 1*

[Teacher starts to read model text that had accomplished the task of the preliminary writing task]  
 [Teacher begins reading student text from OHP]  
*Getting a new playground. Guess what? We're going to get a new playground. Our school already has two playgrounds maybe they are going to make one with a water slide the BIGGEST ONE IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE*  
 whoa=universe right?  
*We should probably get a pool or a hot tub for the girls and boys. (inaudible) get the Park. oh oh I just thought of one*  
 WOW did it sound like someone was really talking there?  
*Oh oh I just thought of one*  
 good voice right?  
 [looking at the student's writing on the OHP, there is a word that is illegible]  
 What do you think this is? GOLD. What do you think this is supposed to be?  
 Ss: <<Pennies? >> <<pencils?>>  
 T: I don't know I underlined it for a purple word. One gold..[inaudible] and diamonds—we'll come back to it when she can tell us what the word is.  
 [Teacher returns to reading exemplary text]  
*Everywhere—that will look SO beautiful*  
 Are those good description words? Gold and diamonds?  
*That will look so beautiful and cute*  
 oh STUDENT!  
*Boys are lame*  
 Did she use that word pretty good? Yeah, nice purple word right?  
*Boys are lame*—so you think a boy or a girl wrote this?  
 Ss: <<A girl >>  
 T: A GIRL

*Textual Metafunction.* In this textual metafunction, the textual function is directing attention towards the resources being used by the student in the Rheme, and to draw attention to the actor in the Theme position, which frames it within student responsibility in Table 5.21. The use of the pronouns *you* and *she* place the responsibility for the actions with the students and the exemplar student text. The use of *someone* in the first instance represents the use of voice that any other students could reproduce, emphasizing that *someone* or *anyone* can use writing that sounds like someone talking to produce good voice. However, these students directed statements are also all questions, and while this does help to elicit details from students, when the teacher is posing questions like this, it may confuse students since it is asking for information, when in the previous stage, student directed tasks were described in the same way.

Table 5.21

*Task Negotiation 1 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Student Responsibility	WOW did it sound like someone	was really talking there?
	What do you	think this is?
	Did she	use that word pretty good?
	so you	think a boy or a girl wrote this?

During this negotiation stage, the agency of students in writing is unclear due to the coupling of questions instead of statements, like those in the orientation and specification stage. Although these questions are leading students to details such as the use of voice: *did it sound like someone was really talking?*, vocabulary usage: *...use that word pretty good?*, and audience: *you think a boy or girl wrote this?*, the

use of questions may make this unclear for ELLs. The use of statements instead of questions may be clearer for ELLs and other students to interpret.

We can see that there is important use of cohesive devices here, with the use of referents to characterize the excellent use of vocabulary, such as *universe right?*, where the desired usage is not only universe, but the entire clause using hyperbole to illustrate a point. This also includes the use of descriptive vocabulary: *gold and diamonds, lame*, and voice: *oh oh I just thought of one*. These are mentioned quite briefly by the teacher, and specific elements of the use of vocabulary, such as the adjectives used— *biggest*, or the use of spoken speech in writing for the characterization of voice: *I just thought of one*, could be brought into more detail by the teacher in order to help students understand what options are available for using voice. The teacher continues to characterize the positive elements of the writing referring directly to the student mostly: *she*, with one instance of a non-specific pronoun: *someone*, to illustrate the conversational style of the utterance. The use of *you* in the Theme position characterized it as more conversational approach to talking with students, asking for their participation, albeit at specific points and only requiring choral responses. The cohesive devices are often mentioned once, in the text, and then they are only mentioned with pieces of the original utterance: *universe right?*, or with referring nouns: *there, that word*.

Table 5.22

*Task Negotiation 1 Cohesive Devices*

	Theme	Rheme
Text	the BIGGEST ONE IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE <sup>1</sup>	
		whoa–universe <sup>1</sup> right?...
Text	Oh oh I just thought of one <sup>2</sup>	
	...WOW did it	sound like
	someone was	really talking there <sup>2</sup> ?
		good voice <sup>2</sup> right?
Text	One gold <sup>3</sup> ... and diamonds <sup>3</sup>	
	Are those <sup>3</sup>	good description words?
		Gold and diamonds <sup>3</sup> ?
Text	Boys are lame <sup>4</sup>	
	Did she	use that word <sup>4</sup> pretty good?
		Yeah, nice purple word <sup>4</sup> right?

If the teacher reiterates the reference that the cohesive devices are pointing at, like in the case of *those good description words: gold and diamonds*, then this discourse becomes more clear. In particular for areas of potential confusion such as voice and vocabulary selection, discourse with more specificity would be more productive for ELLs.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* The use of information questions here start to show an interesting phenomenon, and less interaction from the students. In the task negotiation stage, the teacher should help students work through and highlight what the students need to notice about the model text. The only showing question that is used in this instance is a question about the position of the author, whether it is a boy or girl, and what audience they are appealing to (boys or girls). Students again chorally respond, with little interaction. The leading questions are formed as Y/N questions, but the teacher does not even wait for a response, and the use of this

is hardly different than statements about what language resources the students used. The use of *right?* in this case is working as an elliptical confirmation, which is a common way that this teacher uses appreciation to indicate desired usage of language, but requires no output on the part of the students.

Table 5.23

*Task Negotiation 1 Interpersonal Metafunction*

Type of Question		Question
Information Request: Showing	Y/N	so you think a boy or a girl wrote this?
Information Request: Leading		good voice right? whoa–universe right?
	Y/N	Are those good description words? Gold and diamonds?
	Y/N	WOW did it sound like someone was really talking there?
	Y/N	Did she use that word pretty good?

This use of questions to involve the students in thought processes through the use of questions may be more powerful by confirming with students instead of simply eliciting without actually receiving information.

*Ideational Metafunction.* In the ideational metafunction, we can see that again the teacher is characterizing what the student produces through what the student has actually produced, and how the student used vocabulary, and the identity of the author's gender and writing style to characterize voice and audience. With the focus on voice put on the assessment system of writing tasks, the use of the material process *talking* is key in describing and interpreting excellent use of



voice, as well as the participants involved in writing and considering audience are important details in how this writer accomplished the writing task.

Table 5.24

*Task Negotiation 1 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
(did it sound like)...someone was really	talking	there?
Did she	use	that word (pretty good?)
a boy or a girl	wrote	this?

The teacher could go on to show the use of these material processes in the implementation of voice in the students' writing, although this would be more characteristic of the task specification stage. More emphasis on the usage of these processes could help students understand the necessary actions that are involved in fulfilling the task. The teacher moves on to the task deconstruction stage, where more detail is provided about how the writer achieves the goals of the writing task.

#### **5.5.4 Task Deconstruction 1**

The teacher continues to read through the text, this time focusing more on how the student addressed the aspects of the writing through the discourse.

Table 5.25

*Task Deconstruction 1*

<p>[The teacher continues to read the model text on the OHP]  <i>boys are lame so let's make an lame Park for them, why don't we put a slide</i>          [Teacher is emphasizing the presence of punctuation on the OHP by pointing and vocally emphasizing commas]</p> <p>COMMA.  <i>monkey bars.</i>          COMMA.  <i>and two swings.</i>          What did she just do there?          Items in a series.          that was really good right?          Yeah she made a list, did she use commas right? wow.  <i>It's important to have a playground BECAUSE...</i>  <i>Kids and grown-ups will be happy there's going to have to be two rules</i>  <i>NO boys</i>          Ss: &lt;&lt;Boos&gt;&gt;          [boys booing]          T: <i>And no peeing in the hot tub or pool</i>          Ss: &lt;&lt;Laughing&gt;&gt;          T: <i>Please it's ...DISGUSTING, so don't do it</i>          Is that good voice?          Ss: &lt;&lt;Yeah&gt;&gt;          T: Did it make you laugh?          Ss: &lt;&lt;Yeah&gt;&gt;          T: Did it have purple words?          It's pretty good right?</p>
--

*Textual Metafunction.* In the task deconstruction stage, the teacher is identifying what the model student has done in her writing, and while this was done in the negotiation stage, there is more emphasis on identifying what specific language resources have been used to achieve the writing task. We can see that emphasis is placed, again, on what the student has done successfully in her writing and the elements of the writing directly with cohesive devices: *it, that, there*. Here

we can see the references appearing in Theme and Rheme, with cohesive devices appearing in the Rheme, in the words *list* and the use of commas: *did she use commas right?*. This is highlighting how the student has used the resources, but exactly what she has done is obfuscated by the cohesive items– *there & that*. In particular, *that was really good right?* does not provide much information to the students about what *that* means exactly. The best hint students have is the reading aloud of each comma: *slide COMMA monkey bars COMMA and two swings*, and for the indication of good voice, the reactions that students have and the inclusion of *purple words* is the best resources the students have. There are no further details about which vocabulary words used in the text are the purple words that correspond to excellent usage of voice, and students have only the resources of the OHP text and the vocal emphasis placed on words by the teacher, such as the word *disgusting*. The students may recognize that the teacher has placed emphasis on this through her tone, but they are given no way of reproducing their own voice in their writing.

Table 5.26

*Task Deconstruction 1 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Student Responsibility	What did she	just do there?
	Yeah she	made a list
	did she	use commas right?

Table 5.27

*Task Deconstruction 1 Cohesive Devices*

	Theme	Rheme
<i>text1</i>	<i>why don't we put a slide, monkey bars, and two swings</i>	
	What did she	just do there <sup>1</sup> ?
	Items <sup>1</sup>	in a series <sup>1</sup>
	that <sup>1</sup>	was really good right?
	Yeah she	made a list <sup>1</sup>
	did she	use commas right <sup>1</sup> ?
<i>text2</i>	<i>And no peeing in the hot tub or pool Please it's ...DISGUSTING so don't do it</i>	
	Is	that <sup>2</sup> good voice?
	Did it <sup>2</sup>	make you laugh?
	Did it <sup>2</sup>	have purple words?
	It <sup>2</sup>	's pretty good right?

In this task deconstruction stage, the elements of language that are being used to construct this writing are discussed with the students, but more detail, specifically with the use of vocabulary and voice are necessary to make this clear. The cohesive devices being referenced are not clear enough for students to accurately identify the elements of writing the teacher wants to highlight.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* In the interpersonal metafunction, we can see that the use of questions that require less student response are increasing. Information requests that have students show their understanding only require a choral response from volunteer students, with Y/N questions, and these are to be answered in the affirmative: *Yeah*. With information requests that do not require

student output, the leading questions are answered by the teacher, or not at all. We can see in one instance, the use of *right?* used in this case as approval, as a way to indicate that the commas were used was a valid usage. Contrast this with the use of *that was really good, right?* where the use of *right* is acting as a confirmative appreciation language resource directed towards the students.

Table 5.28

*Task Deconstruction 1 Interpersonal Metafunction*

	Type of Question	Question
Information	Y/N	Is that good voice?
Request: Showing	Y/N	Did it make you laugh?
Information Request: Leading	WH	What did she just do there?
	Y/N	that was really good right?
	Y/N	did she use commas right?
	Y/N	Did it have purple words?
	Y/N	It's pretty good right?

This juxtaposition of this discourse pattern may be confusing when the teacher is deconstructing the proper use of conventions, such as comma use.

*Ideational Metafunction.* The teacher highlights the material processes that the student has used in order to achieve the goals of the writing task. The processes: *made, make, use* are all important actions that the student used in the writing process, with emphasis placed on through the use of commas for creating a list: items in a series, which fulfills a critical requirement of the six traits as defined under organization and conventions. Making the audience laugh is another process related

to the use of voice and connecting with the audience to prompt a positive reaction to the letter.

Table 5.29

*Task Deconstruction 1 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
(What did) she	just do	there?
(Yeah) she	made	a list
(Did) she	use	commas right?
(Did) it	make you	laugh?

Through the highlighting of these processes, the teacher has highlighted the actions that the student took in the deconstruction phase and could further talk about the strategies students can use in fulfilling the requirements. The *items in a series* form of a cohesive device, created for the 6 traits, can be broken down by the teacher, like has been observed here, in the simple making of a list to fulfill this requirement.

In the next section, the teacher transitions back to task negotiation by reading through the remainder of the text, and transitions quickly to task deconstruction. These two stages will be analyzed together.

### **5.5.5 Task Negotiation 2 & Task Deconstruction 2**

The teacher continues to read through the student text, and orally points out elements of the text that the teacher wishes to bring the attention of her students. The teacher transitions quickly to asking students about the language used in the writing that accomplished the goal of this task. The task negotiation is done quickly, without much guidance through the text, unlike the previous negotiation section.

In the transition to the task deconstruction, the teacher indicates that she is done with the reading raising her head up from the OHP while still keeping the lights off, by asking questions about how the student could improve, and looking around the room. In this case she directs her questions specifically to a student, a high level ELL, and asks general questions about the potential improvements and identification of elements of the writing that were *good*.

Table 5.30

*Task Negotiation 2 and Task Deconstruction 2***Task Negotiation 2**

[The teacher continues to read the model text on the OHP]

*This would be so fun for the girls, AND for the boys.  
their park will be so lame.*

*Mrs. Farore COMMA Mrs. Din COMMA and Mrs. Naryu  
what do you say?*

Look she's asking a question right here.

Perfect.

*Is it a yes or no?*

*Circle if it's yes, tell me if it's no, don't bother me please.*

*thanks for all your help.*

Table 5.30 Continued

**Task Deconstruction 2**

[Teacher raises head up from OHP, and starts to look around the classroom, with the lights still off]

What do you think?

What can you say about it that's good

StudentA?

A: She did... Purple words and put.. commas where she's supposed to

T: Oh yeah

Her vocabulary was strong, she had items in a series for different sentence patterns

good– StudentB?

B: She used voice

T: Yeah good I could hear her talking

[Reading an excerpt from the text]

*Oh um I have another idea*

Does it sound like the way Paula talks?

*Boys are lame*

does that sound like her?

Ss: <<Yeah >>

T: Yeah that's good voice coming through

*Textual Metafunction.* In the textual metafunction here in Table 5.31, we see again the focus on the students' writing with the mention of what the student is going in her writing task, referring to her vocabulary, the use of items in a series, and the student asking questions in the task. This also shows a shift to talking to the students in the classroom, asking for confirmation and exploration about inferring what promising practices that the model student was engaging in.



Table 5.31

*Task Negotiation 2 and Task Deconstruction 2 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Student Responsibility	Look she's	asking a question right here
	What do	you think?
	What can	you say about it that's good
	Her	vocabulary was strong
	she	had items in a series for different sentence patterns
	I could hear her	talking
	Does it sound like the way Paula	talks?

The teacher provides details about the elements of the writing that students provide in their answers. The students comment that the model text had comma usage and the use of purple words, and the teacher expands on this by describing in more detail that *her vocabulary was strong, she had items in a series* and the teacher *could hear her talking* when describing good uses of word choice, organization and conventions and voice. This can be seen the cohesive devices used in the discourse as well. In the cohesive devices, the teacher refers back to the model text, and the uses of language throughout the text. Through questions, the teacher directs students to the language resources used, and builds off of the student responses to provide more detail. Although students are not able to give much detail, the teacher can provide more examples and elaboration on what language the students have produced.

Table 5.32

*Task Negotiation 2 and Task Deconstruction 2 Cohesive Devices*

	Theme	Rheme
<i>text1</i>	<i>Mrs. Farore, Mrs. Din, and Mrs. Naryu, what do you say?</i> <sup>1</sup>	
	Look she	's asking a question right here <sup>1</sup>
	What can you	say about it <sup>modeltext</sup> that's good?
<i>student answer</i>	She did... Purple words <sup>2</sup> and put.. commas where she's supposed to <sup>3</sup>	
	Her	vocabulary <sup>2</sup> was strong
	she	had items in a series for different sentence patterns <sup>3</sup>
<i>student answer</i>	She used voice <sup>4</sup>	
	Yeah good I	could hear her talking <sup>4</sup>
<i>text2</i>	<i>Oh um I have another idea... Boys are lame</i> <sup>5</sup>	
	Yeah that <sup>5</sup>	's good voice coming through

The teacher could make this more powerful by highlighting and mentioning by name what each element of language, such as vocabulary, voice, and organization fulfilled the task. The only instance that is highlighted is the voice excerpts: *Oh um I have another idea...Boys are lame*. This deconstruction could be made more powerful by pointing out each good instance of the model text.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* Through the interpersonal function, we can see the information requests are directed at the students in general, but also directly ask for student input from specifically selected students. These questions start the majority of the discourse in the deconstruction stage, with the teacher relying on the students to be able to provide the deconstruction of the good use of language

resources in this example text. This showing question: *What can you say about it that's good* is repeated twice in this excerpt, and elicits content from the student, in which the teacher builds upon, as can be seen in the cohesive device analysis Table 5.32. The teacher is using these questions to help all of the students in the classroom to recognize the language resources used in the model text, supporting student responses with excerpts from the text, although this is not always the case. The leading questions offer a hint about the use of voice, and paired with the showing questions, the use of good voice is characterized by what someone sounds like—which may not be enough detail for some students struggling with the use of voice.

Table 5.33

*Task Negotiation 2 and Task Deconstruction 2 Interpersonal Metafunction*

Type of Question		Question
Information Request: Showing	WH	What can you say about it that's good?
	Y/N	does that sound like her?
Information Request: Leading	WH	What do you think?
	Y/N	Does it sound like the way Paula talks?

Instead of having students begin the deconstruction with these questions, the teacher may want to start with highlighting what is *good* about the text, and having students identify the task that it fulfills.

*Ideational Metafunction.* In Table 5.34, we can see the use of material processes directed at the students in the classroom to determine what elements of

writing the model text featured that made this a successful writing task. Again we see through the participants and goals that the focus is on what she accomplished through the processes, with a large focus on the use of voice, reflected in the use of verbal processes, and material processes. The students are expected to be able to determine how to achieve the desired outcome through their own understanding of the material processes in the teachers' discourse.

Table 5.34

*Task Negotiation 2 and Task Deconstruction 2 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
Look she	's asking	a question (right here)
What	can you say about	it that's good?
(Yeah good) I could hear her	talking	
(Yeah) that's good voice	coming through	

The teacher continues to read the text, pointing out the use of a question used directly in the letter, where the student asks a question in her writing. We can see here the first reference to not just a writing strategy, but what she is actually doing in her writing. Although this is a unique rhetorical move for a letter, the teacher makes no mention of this during the class, which may be a failing of the assessment system that she uses, and later mentions this in an interview as a possible disadvantage, particularly the usage of voice in all assignments. However, this is another instance in when in the teachers' discourse we can see the use of the material process, asking a question, which is another strategy that she uses to fulfill the writing task. And although the student uses questions multiple times in succession, the teacher does not point this out immediately.

Although student discourse is not involved in this analysis, we can see that the student, who is described as a high level ELL student, cannot provide specific details about the writing, only talking about using purple words, but without any specific referent, and using commas, but without reference to list creation or in *items in a series*. In the interpersonal analysis, the teacher refers to the use of vocabulary as strong and the use of commas in a context of different sentence patterns in her questions to students, but makes only a few references back to the source text. However, in the next instance, when the student mentions voice, the teacher uses excerpts from the text to show the student uses voice in the writing exercise, and characterizes it as *good voice*, using the relational processes *sound like* which indicate that voice is supposed to represent the authors' identity, and effective voice will be able to communicate this.

#### **5.5.6 Task Specification 2**

In this final section, the teacher specifies potential areas of improvement for the students by eliciting student responses using questions to identify areas of improvement, and talking directly to the student about how to improve her writing in the future.

Table 5.35

*Task Specification 2*

[Teacher addresses students with questions to wrap up this model text]

Okay where is something that she could make one improvement?  
one area to improve?  
(...)  
think about your six traits  
(...)  
What you think?  
StudentC?  
C: (inaudible) dear and(...)maybe she put dear (...)  
T: If she would have put a letter SAYING this stuff  
she would have answered everything in the front  
it was an amazing writing right?  
We all liked it— everyone in here laughed  
Everybody laughed—and guess what?  
All eyes were on the board  
you guys must've liked to hear what Paula had to say  
OKAY it was GOOD  
Good job Paula  
so next time what are you going to do to make your writing a little stronger Paula?  
  
(...)  
reread the directions?  
That's it  
a good idea=reread the directions is that good advice?  
All right we are going to do one more today.

*Textual Metafunction.* This textual analysis shows us again, the focus being placed on the agency of the student, not only in her excellence in achieving the goal of the task, but also in potential improvements that can be made in these areas. However, these statements are obfuscated by the implementation of cohesive devices in a number of different abstractions, such as *improvement*, *everything*, and *this stuff*. There is some effort made to explain how to fulfill the *improvement* more specifically: through improving one area, through the use of the six traits, which also

coincides with a larger, more complex system, albeit one that has been reviewed thoroughly with the students. Despite the emphasis put on the six traits, the emphasis put on improvement is related to organization, in *answering everything in the front*, but this is not made clear. The cohesive device *everything* does not have a clear referent, but it seems to be pointing to the original prompt, more specifically, the numbered list that the student had written on her paper, which was not represented in the discourse, but was visible on the OHP.

Table 5.36

*Task Specification 2 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Student Responsibility	where is something that she	could make one improvement ?
	If she	would have put a letter SAYING this stuff
	she	would have answered everything in the front
	you guys	must've liked to hear what
	Paula	had to say
	so next time what are you	going to do to make your writing a little stronger Paula?

Table 5.37

*Task Specification 2 Cohesive Devices*

Theme	Rheme
where is something that she	could make one improvement <sup>1</sup> ?
If she	would have put a letter <sup>1</sup>
SAYING	this stuff <sup>1</sup>
she	would have answered everything <sup>1</sup> in the front
it <sup>modeltext</sup> was	an amazing writing right?

There is a strong reliance on the content previously covered, and there are very few visual scaffolds provided to students to establish clear cohesive devices and referents, making students rely mainly on spoken language to interpret the correct flow of information. This reliance on spoken dialogue in following these referents may cause confusion and students to disengage from the lecture, despite the teacher giving what is intended to be explicit direction on how to fulfill the task. The specification stage should provide more details, particularly on how to make improvements with detailed descriptions, and if time allows, rewriting the trouble areas.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* In this final task specification stage, the teacher is actively asking for cooperation from the students in answering how they can make potential improvements on the writing task. Through the WH–interrogative question, the teacher asks about *one area to improve*, and specifically to the student, what they are going to do to make their writing *stronger*. These showing questions should provide the teacher and student the opportunity to expand on the model text and



provide detailed information on how to improve these areas, especially with WH questions. The use of the leading questions are also limited, with only Y/N questions used with no need for responses. These again hint at what makes the writing *amazing*, the use of humor and the importance of pre-writing strategies, but only rereading the directions is mentioned specifically.

Table 5.38

*Task Specification 2 Interpersonal Metafunction*

Type of Question		Question
Information Request: Showing	WH	Okay where is something that she could make one improvement? one area to improve?
	WH	so next time what are you going to do to make your writing a little stronger Paula?
Information Request: Leading	Y/N	it was an amazing writing right?
	Y/N	Everybody laughed—and guess what? a good idea=reread the directions is that good advice?

The use of questions here can be used to interact with students, and get a sense of their comprehension of the topic. In this case, the elaboration on the answers could have helped the entire class determine better strategies and how to improve their own writing, if more details had been included.

*Ideational Metafunction.* In this final stage of the textual modeling curriculum genre, we can see how the ideational metafunction highlights how the student can make improvements and how the processes involved make this occur.

In listing the goals of each clause in this interaction, we can see that the teacher is looking for improvements, such as a letter with better organization. Coupled with the processes involved, there are a number of different strategies that the teacher is hinting at within this final stage. These material processes include: *make, improve, put/place, reread*. These processes and these goals could be further emphasized by the teacher and distilled into student strategies for writing, such as saying, or answering the prompt with important information in front. For example, the goal *improvement* is realized through put[ting] everything in front in a letter that *said this stuff*. Of course as we have seen before, the difficulty comes in interpreting exactly what is meant by the goals, which hold a degree of abstraction, from the nonspecific *improvement* to be made to the writing, to the vague cohesive devices, *this stuff* and *everything in front*, which may not have been enough information for students to understand adequately.

Table 5.39

*Task Specification 2 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
Where is something that she one area	could make to improve?	one improvement,
If she	would have put SAYING	a letter this stuff
she	would have answered	everything in the front
what are you	going to do to make reread	your writing (a little stronger) the directions

In this stage, there were still many instances of obfuscated language and vague goals such as *stuff, everything* which may make it difficult for students,

particularly ELLs to understand the difference that can be made in organization to more effectively answer the purpose of this writing task.

## **5.6 Third Grade Teacher Analysis**

In this teacher's classroom discourse, the use of cohesive devices, material processes and the use of questions by this teacher have a very casual, conversational feel to it, but for the most part the teacher is very much in control of the discourse in the classroom, leaving few genuine opportunities for students to respond to the interrogative questions or make real contributions during the classroom discourse. These may be intended to be guiding questions, and due to time constraints, this teacher may have felt that answering these questions explicitly may have been redundant or difficult to address due to limited space on the OHP or other considerations. However, this sort of attention to detail in language usage along with additional use of visuals may have been a more effective way to increase efficient usage of language in this discourse. For English Language Learners, the modeling of academic language and the ways to fulfill the requirements of writing assignments should be clearly modeled for students, with detailed explanations built off of student responses.

### **5.6.1 Textual Metafunction Analysis**

This teacher has shown a great deal of willingness to be collaborative with her students as we can see from the back-and-forth conversation and her effort to include students often with the use of we in the thematic position. The teacher focuses the accomplishments of her students clearly when referring to the model

text characterizing the achievements that the student has made with the use of *she* or *her writing*, and characterizes what her students' agency in this thematic position. The teacher is consistent in her use of textual organization and cohesive devices. The information referenced by cohesive devices is often included within the same stage or the same excerpt of discourse, in the beginning stages of the curriculum genre. This makes it fairly easy for English language learners to comprehend the flow of information and follow directions as well as suggestions that the teacher makes concerning writing and promising practices in the model text. As the teacher moves deeper into the task however, the cohesive devices become more abstract, and students may have trouble connecting these with the original reference. When these include complex concepts, such as *improvements*, which can have a number of different meanings, this may be overwhelming for ELLs.

The teacher's style of discourse, emphasizing words vocally, allows students to recognize the most important information in regards to writing, which is located in the Rheme position. Students who pick up on this information organization will have a better idea of what is required of them in the writing task. If the teacher has a better idea of how the organization of discourse can help students' comprehension, they can become more mindful particularly of cohesive devices and how new and old information is portrayed to the students through Theme and Rheme. Teachers should be mindful, however, of the potential of the obfuscation of cohesive devices as the task becomes more complex, particularly as the curriculum genre starts to repeat stages, and builds upon what has been previously discussed.

### 5.6.2 Interpersonal Metafunction Analysis

The third grade teacher uses WH & Yes/No interrogative questions in order to emphasize the importance of the promising practices that she sees in the model text, and to bring students' attention to these elements. These direct the students towards language resources that can help them improve their writing and characterize them as being approaches that other students can use. Through interacting with the entire class with questions, these resources can orient all students to understand how the model text was successful in writing.

Despite the many instances of interrogatives used in the discourse, the number of showing questions that required input from the students was scarce, and only in two instances did these questions ask for detailed answers from students. Most of the showing questions were limited to Y/N interrogatives, and conducted similarly to confirming that students were paying attention. When students reply chorally, there is little evidence that all students are paying attention, only those who are vocal. The use of leading questions, require no input from students, and are used to hint to students what *might* be useful for their questions, but do not make this explicit. These leading questions could be used to provide more details to students, or turn to showing questions to understand students' writing processes. If the teacher can add more detail or elaboration about why these resources are being used i.e. giving justification as to why certain language resources are being used to produce good writing, this could be even more helpful for students, particularly in

regards to elements of the six traits that are difficult to provide details on, such as voice and audience.

### **5.6.3 Ideational Metafunction Analysis**

In combination with the textual and interpersonal metafunctions, the focus on the processes, goals and participants in the discourse should provide the teachers with more detail and different ways of thinking about her classroom discourse, particularly in the fashion in which she presents elements of the model text that the teacher wants the students to reproduce. With the use of the teacher's metalanguage that she has already established in the classroom, emphasizing the use of the promising processes and goals in the writing classroom, the teacher can make more meaningful use of the classroom discourse to provide for students with stronger language resources and more elaboration and more detail on potentially problematic and complex instances of language usage such as cohesive devices and nominalization. Teacher discourse that focuses on the doings and happenings in the writing process, through emphasis of the use of material processes can help students understand what the expectations of the task are. Combined with the textual and interpersonal metafunctions, these approaches will also make it easier for teachers to introduce the use of more academic language in the writing tasks.

This analysis has given us a perspective on what language resources the teacher uses in the classroom, and what ways the teachers makes meaning and is communicating with her students. This is not meant to be an exhaustive analysis, but a small sample of this teachers' discourse when explicitly addressing exemplary

student texts. This analysis shows us how the teachers language usage could be more focused through focused use and reference to cohesive devices and their referents, the processes used in discourse and how these can be more effectively translated into student strategies, goal making, and writing resources for students.

## **5.7 Fifth Grade Analysis**

This excerpt comes from the fifth grade classroom, which also features a model text in the classroom to be used to guide students to the writing task. In this case, the model text is not student generated, but the first stage of a compare and contrast writing task. The model text features a description of a school day in a Chinese school, and students are directed to create their own description of their school day based on this model text.

### **5.7.1 Task Orientation 1**

This class starts with the teacher orienting the students to the task of preparing a graphical organizer for a compare and contrast essay, the topic being to compare and contrast the practices of their own school, Eagleland, in comparison with their Chinese sister school that they had just read about in class. Their task is to 1) read the essay 2) highlight important elements of the story and 3) to make a list about their daily lives in contrast to the children's lifestyle in China. Due to scheduling, this excerpt begins halfway during the task orientation phase.

Instead of reading the text aloud, we have the teacher reading the first few sentences of the text, and then guiding the students to notice what to look for in the

text, leaving the responsibility of comprehension of the text and selecting relevant information to the students.

Table 5.40

*Task Orientation 1*

[T is continuing reading model text about school life in China]

*They have free time and things like that*

*But in China their education is much much different than what it is here*

And Mr. Gannon would tell us things about the kids and things that were going on, Their schools and what it was like, their day how it started how it went how it ended,

and it was basically a time schedule type, for our Corporation, for this nine weeks. that's what you are going to be doing.

And in a few minutes you're going to be divided into groups, what you are going to do your group is you are going to make a list and everybody has to write on their paper the list

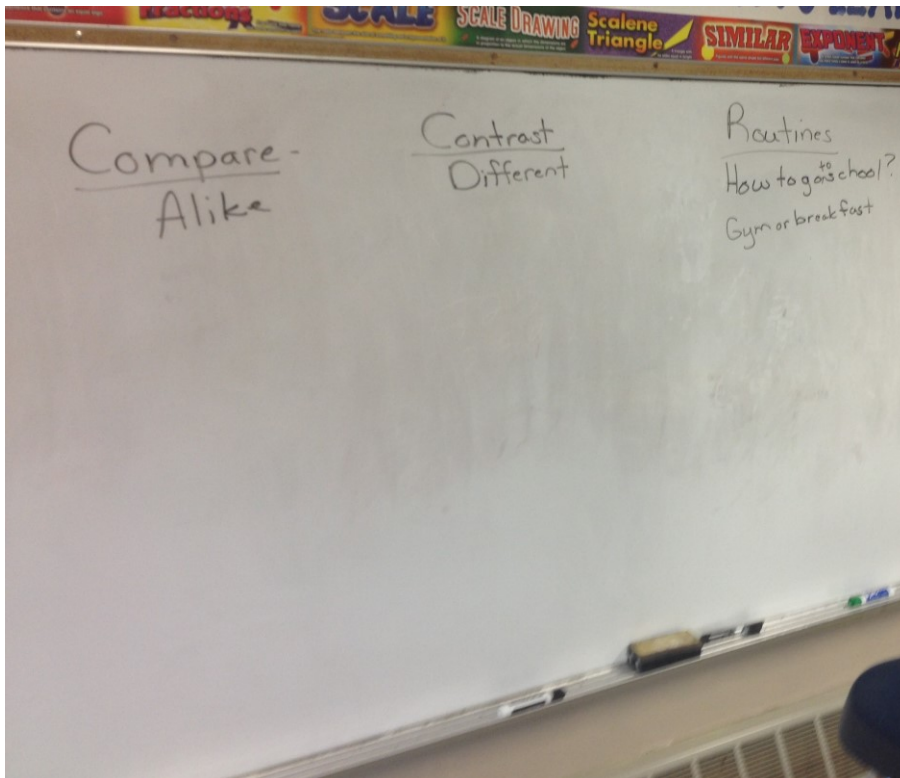


Figure 5.1. White Board.



*Textual Metafunction.* In the textual metafunction, we can see the emphasis is placed completely on students, directed at the group: *you, everybody, in your group*, and making clear that the responsibility is with the students to perform the writing task and planning stages.

Table 5.41

*Task Orientation 1 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Student Responsibility	that's what you	are going to be doing
	And in a few minutes you	're going to be divided into groups
	what you	are going to do
	your group	is—
	you	are going to make a list and
	everybody	has to write on their paper the list

This orientation stage is accomplishing the task of making it clear to students what is expected of them, and that they will be held responsible for accomplishing the entire task therein. Students are directed to rely upon each other within their groups, which encourages the use of teamwork throughout this assignment, at least in the context of the classroom discourse.

We can see the use of textual cohesion in describing the tasks that students will have to accomplish. We can already see that the actual task to be completed in this writing classroom is already becoming complicated. With the mention of *that's what you are going to be doing*, the referencing *that* is already unclear, but likely corresponds to lecture just delivered by the teacher. The list that students have to complete is not mentioned on any of the materials or handouts that students have

received, but it is possible that the teacher has outlined this task before the researcher entered the room.

Table 5.42

*Task Orientation 1 Cohesive Devices*

	Theme	Rheme
lecture	<p><i>And Mr. Gannon would tell us things about the kids and things that were going on Their schools and what it was like day how it started how it went how it ended and it was basically a time schedule type for our Corporation for this nine weeks<sup>1</sup></i></p>	
	that's <sup>1</sup> what you	are going to be doing
	you	are going to make a list <sup>task</sup> and
	everybody	has to write on their paper the list <sup>task</sup>

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* At this point, there is no utilization of interrogative questions. The orientation stage is limited to commands and statements, in a teacher oriented lecture.

*Ideational Metafunction.* In this task orientation of the task for the fifth grade students, we see similar phenomenon occurring when we look at the instruction relating directly to achieving the goals of the writing task, in this case the pre-writing task of listing ideas to go into the future writing task. The teacher orients the students to this task with the interpersonal metafunction with the material processes *make* a list.

Table 5.43

*Task Orientation 1 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
		that's what
you	are going to be doing	
(And in a few minutes) you	're going to be divided	into groups
(what you are going to do your group is) you	are going to make	a list
and everybody	has to write (on their paper)	the list

The teacher is prompting students to begin the brainstorming process through the use of a graphic organizer. This organizer is divided into two sides with the title COMPARE & CONTRAST, under which has the words ALIKE and DIFFERENT, which is also written on the whiteboard as seen in *Figure 5.1*. The teacher uses material processes to talk about what students must do to fulfill this task.

This orientation stage is composed of the teacher lecturing to students what they need to accomplish, without any input from students. The use of goals and processes here indicate what the teacher expects and how to accomplish the task, but no indication of the content to be included is mentioned yet.

### 5.7.2 Task Specification 1

In the task specification stage, the teacher starts to talk about how the students can go about addressing the task. The teacher stands at the front of the classroom, with the model text in hand, and starts to ask questions to the entire class.

Table 5.44

*Task Specification 1*

[Teacher is at the front of the classroom, pacing around, with the model text in hand. Each student has a copy. The teacher lectures about the task, and intermittently reads from the model text]

if you are going to describe a day as a fifth-grader at Eagleland, starting when you get here,  
 what happens?  
 What is the day like?  
 What kind of things go on?  
 What do you do?  
 You know what you want to focus in on= The start of the day.  
 I want to see what goes on DURING the day.  
 Lunch—what is lunch like?  
 Those kinds of things —the end of the day.  
 and some people within your group—some of you have different things at the end of the day—some of you don't go home at 2:30  
 some of you go for different things  
 THOSE are the types of things that go in there—but you are going to come up with a list  
 we are going to describe the Eagleland elementary day to the Chinese students  
 what would you tell them that your day is like?  
 So as a GROUP, you are going to get in your groups and you are going to make that list

*Textual Metafunction.* In the textual metafunction in the first specification stage, the teacher is characterizing the responsibility of the student, and the teacher's authority in describing what she wants to see in this task. The task is oriented as being a task performed primarily by the student groups: *you are going to...come up with a list, make a list, describe a day, but together we are going to describe...to the Chinese students* which alludes to an authentic task that may occur later on, when the students have the chance to explain or talk with the Chinese students.

Table 5.45

*Task Specification 1 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Collective Responsibility	we are	going to describe the Eagleland elementary day to the Chinese students
Student Responsibility	if you	are going to describe a day as a fifth-grader at Eagleland
	starting when you	get here
	What do you	do?
	You know what you	want to focus in on
	some of you	have different things at the end of the day
	some of you	don't go home at 2:30
	some of you	go for different things
	but you	are going to come up with a list
	what would you	tell them that your day is like?
	So as a GROUP you	are going to get in your groups and
you are	going to make that list	

The cohesive devices used in this classroom discourse are already difficult to distinguish within the flow of information occurring, particularly with terms that have complex, multi-faceted meanings, such as the task of *describing a day*. The teacher refers to the entire task by asking students to think about *what the day is like*, and starts to talk specifically about the times of day to write about. The teacher lists the times of day students are to talk about, and then uses cohesive devices to refer to all of them at once, and direct that these instances should all end up in the description of the day as seen in Table 5.46.

Table 5.46

*Task Specification 1 Cohesive Devices*

Theme	Rheme
if you	are going to describe a day as a fifth-grader at Eagleland <sup>1</sup>
that <sup>1a</sup>	starting when you get here <sup>1a</sup>
What	would vary for some people
	is the day <sup>1</sup> like?
	The start of the day <sup>1a</sup>
I want to see what	goes on DURING the day <sup>1b</sup>
Lunch <sup>1c</sup> —what	is lunch like? <sup>1c</sup>
Those kinds of things <sup>1abc</sup>	the end of the day <sup>1d</sup>
THOSE <sup>1abcd</sup>	are the types of things that go in there <sup>1</sup>

In the last line, the cohesive device *those* references back to the start, during, lunch, and the end of the day, all to be combined into the description of the day. At this point, no note taking or writing on the whiteboard is taking place, so students only have the spoken discourse to rely on to interpret the expectations of the discourse. According to memos and field notes, very few students are actively taking notes at this time.

The authority of the teacher is very strong in this stage, with little interaction between teacher and student in the orientation and specification stage of this curriculum genre, and the responsibility for the production of this text is firmly planted in the hands of the students. The details that the teacher means to impart to the students, however, are vague and difficult to interpret, which is due to the verbal discourse with numerous cohesive devices and unclear referents, such as the use of words such as *things*. As we enter the task specification stage, we can see

how the language specifies what the teacher expects the students to extract from the model text in order to proceed with their own writing task.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* In this stage, the interpersonal use of interrogative questions can be seen clearly, with a number of instances of question use. The use of questions is consistent in this teacher's discourse in the specification stage, with a clear preference for *leading* questions, which is congruent with the situating of responsibility in the students' laps. The use of the leading questions in this classroom does not allow time for students to answer, but are to be considered by students and answered independently, since the nature of the prompt requires that each students' responses be original, to some extent. Despite this, students are working together in groups to brainstorm and create their list.

Table 5.47

*Task Specification 1 Interpersonal Metafunction*

	Type of Question	Question
Information Request: Leading	WH	what happens? What is the day like? What kind of things go on? What do you do?
	WH	Lunch—what is lunch like?
	WH	we are going to describe the Eagleland elementary day to the Chinese students what would you tell them that your day is like?

In this use of WH–interrogative questions, the teacher is not writing, or listing these on the board for students to see, and does not give students enough

time to take notes. These questions function in order to prompt students to start thinking about their daily lives in more specific aspects. There are differences in agency in this as well, as we can see between the passive *what kind of things go on* and *what do you do?* which are being combined together in the same inquiry. This is consistent with the leading questions, in that these are not functioning as demanding information or display questions for the entire class, but providing information about what to write about, by offering mini-prompts to the students to encourage further writing and expansion on the larger topic of a compare and contrast essay.

*Ideational Metafunction.* There are mentions of many material processes in this discourse, but there is not enough detail provided alongside them to help students develop the language resources for these processes. The listing of goals that students need to discuss, which are also acting as cohesive devices, provide students with potential topics that they can write about, but no elaboration of these goals is provided.



Table 5.48

*Task Specification 1 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
if you are going to what	describe happens?	a day as a fifth-grader at Eagleland
What kind of things What do you	go on? do?	
You know what you want to	focus in on:	The start of the day
I want to see what some of you	goes on have	DURING the day different things at the end of the day
some of you some of you	don't go go for	home at 2:30 different things
THOSE are the types of things that	go in	there
but you are going to	come up	with a list
we are going to	describe	the Eagleland elementary day to the Chinese students
So as a GROUP you ...	are going to make	that list

Even without providing additional elaboration on the material processes being listed in this section of discourse, the teachers or students could be taking notes or listing these verbs and goals on the whiteboard, in order to provide further elaboration later on.

In this specification stage, the discourse is showing how the teacher specifies how the tasks can be completed through listing possible topics and elements of writing to be included. Although no detailed language is listed at this point, this may be due to the ideology of the teacher, that students should not be given the answers, and must think for themselves, and provide the details themselves. Since this is a pre-writing activity, the teacher may not want to provide the additional elaboration.

It may also be the case that ELLs may not be able to make the connections that the teacher excerpts from the vague use of cohesive devices and material processes listed by the teacher.

### 5.7.3 Task Orientation 2

In the next stage the teacher hands out graphic organizers to students, and starts to read the model text, but quickly transitions into talking about what students are going to do in class. The teacher wants the students to read the story independently, and use this information to fill out the graphic organizers.

Table 5.49

#### *Task Orientation 2*

[Students given graphic organizer to make list]  
 [Teacher referring to the model text "Day in the life of a fifth grader"]  
*Day in the life of a fifth-grader*  
*China*—since China is kind of our partners here, you are going to go through and you are going to be reading this—as a group.  
 and you are going to kind of underline things = things that are alike and different things like that.  
 we'll talk about things like that a little bit, but before we do this part I want you guys in the group-3 to 4 of you in a group= you're going to write this out.  
 describe Eagleland's day.  
 some of you guys have gone to other schools other than Eagleland or Threed and other school systems are set up differently than ours.  
 everything is not exactly the same.  
 so we are going to be looking for those LIKENESSES = remember you are going to be comparing—you are going to be doing a contrast.  
 we can talk about things but like our school that is different from Eagleland=like other schools in the city that if they were reading about Indiana  
 [Transition to Task Negotiation]  
 what would be some things that are different about our school than any other school?

The teacher begins by directing students to focus on reading the model text and underline *things that are alike and different*, but then quickly shifts gears back and forth from *describe Eagleland's day*. These quick transitions and few pauses put great stress on ELLs' comprehension of the lectures and tasks being posed to students.

*Textual Metafunction.* In the textual metafunction in the orientation stage, we can see that there is much more negotiation in the student responsibility and collective responsibility of the task. The teacher frames that the ultimate responsibility of understanding and writing down what is needed for the compare and contrast essay will be up to the students, but the teacher will provide the framework beforehand.

Table 5.50

*Task Orientation 2 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Collective Responsibility	we'll	talk about things like that a little bit
	but before we	do this part
	so we	are going to be looking for those LIKENESSES
	we	can talk about things
	but like our school that	is different from Eagleland
Student Responsibility	you	are going to go through and
	you	are going to be reading this=as a group
	and you	are going to kind of underline things
	I want you guys in the group— 3 to 4 of you in a group you're	going to write this out
	remember you	are going to be comparing
	you	are going to be doing a contrast

The teacher again characterizes what students are going to do, while the group is characterized more by what to look for and discuss, before actually doing the *individual* task. Here we can see the value that the teacher is assigning to the group work that students are to do, mainly working together to identify resources to use in the completion of the list creation.

Through the use of cohesive devices, the teacher is showing students what they should be reading the text looking for. The graphic organizer they just received has compare and contrast at the top, and the teacher has written this on the board, with alike and different below (Figure 5.5.7.1–White Board). Although these are congruent with the teacher discourse, the cohesive devices used to hint students to what they should include in their organizer are complex and multi-faceted.

Table 5.51

*Task Orientation 2 Cohesive Devices*

Theme	Rheme
you	are going to be reading this <sup>modeltext</sup> —as a group
and you	are going to kind of underline things <sup>1</sup>
	things that are alike and different <sup>1</sup>
	things <sup>1</sup> like that
	we'll talk about things <sup>1</sup> like that a little bit
you're	going to write this <sup>2</sup> out
	describe Eagleland's day <sup>2</sup>
some of you guys	have gone to other schools other than Eagleland or Threed and other school systems are set up differently <sup>3</sup> than ours
	everything <sup>1+3</sup> is not exactly the same
	so we are going to be looking for those LIKENESSES?

The teacher indicates that students will have to write in order to *describe Eagleland's day*, including details about *things that are alike and different*, which include how schools are set up differently between Eagleland and Chinese schools, although this is not made clear in the discourse. More detail about *things that are alike and different* are addressed further in the negotiation stage, and cohesive devices are given more context, although this may not be enough details for ELLs to fully understand what is being asked of the students. At this juncture, details about how schools are set up, likenesses and differences are not made clear, concerning just what ELLs should be writing about.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* Similarly to the first instance of the task orientation, there is no utilization of interrogative questions. The orientation stage is again limited to commands and statements, in a teacher oriented lecture, and with no input sought from the students, although appeals to their background knowledge are made: *some of you guys have gone to other schools ...and ... are set up differently than ours.*

*Ideational Metafunction.* In the ideational metafunction, the teacher is again using material processes and goals to talk about what actions these students are going to be performing to accomplish this compare and contrast task. The processes and goals are not given adequate detail, as discussed in the textual metafunction, but in the negotiation stage, more detail should be provided.

Table 5.52

*Task Orientation 2 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Processes	Goals
and you are going to kind of	underline	things
you're	going to write	this out
	describe	Eagleland's day
so we are going to be	looking for	those LIKENESSES
remember you are going to be	comparing	
you are going	to be doing	a contrast

Again, these processes in the orientation stage are simply here to point out the strategies that students can use to accomplish the task. In the negotiation stage, there will be the chance to provide further details and give students the language resources necessary to materialize these processes and goals, so that ELLs and other students will be prepared for the independent language task.

**5.7.4 Task Negotiation 2**

In the next section, the teacher shifts from further Orientation to Task Negotiation with the question to students: *what would be some things that are different about our school than any other school?* Instead of a being limited to leading questions, in this instance, the teacher and students take the chance to interact with and provide examples of answers.

Table 5.53

*Task Negotiation 2*

[The teacher references the model text: *Life of a fifth grader* while talking about the task at hand: all students have a copy of this text.]

T: what would be some things that are different about our school than any other school?

S: They don't have a dress code?

T: They don't have a standardized dress do they?

So that might be something you are going to—and obviously you'll have it in there but one thing about our school where everybody comes together, and that will be something that you want to mention in there, because it does affect part of our school days—it's how we come to school it's how we're getting ready for school and those kinds of things.

alright?

*Textual Metafunction.* In this textual metafunction we can see in a quick question answer interaction between the teacher and students that already there are large amounts of information being condensed into cohesive devices. The teacher leads with the most important point to focus on: things that are different about our school. The collective responsibility here is highlighting what all students can write in their compare and contrast graphic organizer, information about their school in which they can all *come together*. Although the responsibility for writing this is clearly told by the teacher is the students', this would have been a good opportunity to take advantage of the white board and write some things that are similar for all students. The cohesive devices in this excerpt are portrayed in a logical fashion, and students seem to be able to follow the flow of information.

Table 5.54

*Task Negotiation 2 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Collective Responsibility	what would be some things that are different about our	school than any other school?
	because it does affect part of our school days—it's how we	come to school
	it's how we're	getting ready for school and those kinds of things
Student Responsibility	So that might be something you	are going to—
	and obviously you'll	have it in there but one thing about our school
	where everybody comes together and that will be something that you	want to mention in there

We can see in the cohesive devices that there is repeated mentions about the presence of standardized dress in the school, and has an influence on other aspects that can be expanded upon in the task. Elaborating more on how it influences these practices would be even more informative for ELLs and provide more language resources to be use in the brainstorming/writing task.

Table 5.55

*Task Negotiation 2 Cohesive Devices*

	Theme	Rheme
T:	what would be	some things that are different <sup>1</sup> about our school than any other school <sup>2</sup> ?
S:	They <sup>2</sup>	don't have a dress code <sup>3</sup> ?
T:	They <sup>2</sup>	don't have a standardized dress <sup>3</sup> do they?
	So that <sup>3</sup>	might be something ...
	obviously you'll	have it <sup>3</sup> in there <sup>TASK</sup>
	because it <sup>3</sup>	does affect part of our school days—
	it's <sup>3</sup> how we	come to school
	it's <sup>3</sup> how we're	getting ready for school and those kinds of things <sup>1</sup>



*Interpersonal Metafunction.* In this negotiation stage, the teacher prompts and continues the conversation with showing and leading questions, but spends most of the time to lecture to students about what they are expected to accomplish. These showing questions have a very large scope, which may allow students freedom to respond, but may not provide students enough support to continue this process.

Table 5.56

*Task Negotiation 2 Interpersonal Metafunction*

Type of Question		Question
Information Request: Showing	WH	what would be some things that are different about our school than any other school?
Information Request: Leading	Y/N	They don't have a standardized dress do they?

*Ideational Metafunction.* In describing the differences between schools and potential ways of fulfilling the writing tasks of this assignment, we can see very few instances of processes that describe how the writing process can be helped along with material processes. For the compare and contrast list building however, the goals may be of more importance than processes. Despite this, we can see little detail given in the goals aspect. The details that students need in order to complete this list is embedded in the *coming* and *getting ready* for school.

Table 5.57

*Task Negotiation 2 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
They	don't have a	standardized dress
(that will be something that) you want to	mention	in there
it's how we	come	to school
it's how we're	getting ready	for school

In this negotiation stage, there was more lecturing and interaction with students, with instruction coming from the teacher about what is expected. Although there are fewer referents than previous stages, there is still use of cohesive devices that are built upon, and require students to continuously concentrate on rely on correctly interpreting the oral discourse. The students still have to rely on correctly interpreting the *that* and *it* that are repeated throughout, with few contextual clues provided by the teacher. Scaffolds such as written language or additional visuals could be helpful in supporting this oral discourse.

### 5.7.5 Task Specification 2

In this task specification stage, the teacher is providing more detail about what content she wants to see in the writing task, and providing possible topics that students can write about. However, we can also see that the teacher is exercising her authority and placing the responsibility of the writing task completely in the lap of the students, even going as far as not caring what content is included in the writing task or how it is organized.

Table 5.58

*Task Specification 2*

[Teacher continues to lecture to students]

Think about interactions that you have—the times that you have to be with kids.  
 Think about your specials.  
 But you are going to break down the day.  
 You are going to describe the day.  
 I don't care—you decide as a group—you decide how you want to do it  
 you want to go by hour? What do you want to do?  
 Morning afternoon whatever= but within that listing  
 start listing the things that happen during a day at Eagleland= does everybody have  
 that? Does everyone understand what you are going to be doing?  
 (...)  
 Anyone that DOESN'T know?  
 (...)

*Textual Metafunction.* Again we can see a great emphasis on the students' responsibility as writers due to the authority being exerted by the teacher on the students, as an individual (you) or as a group. The teacher goes as far as mentioning that *I don't care* how the students complete the task, giving students complete authority and little guidance. This can be particularly confusing when we start to look at the cohesive devices in this discourse, which offer little detail about what students should be including in their writing. These cohesive devices are referring to prior knowledge of students, and the onus of verbalizing these and producing these in the task is on the students. The *interactions* and *times you have with kids*, and *specials* are not elaborated on.

Table 5.59

*Task Specification 2 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Student Responsibility	Think about interactions that you	have
	the times that you	have to be with kids
	Think about your	specials
	But you	are going to break down the day
	you	are going to describe the day
	I don't care you	decide as a group
	you	decide how you want to do it
	you	want to go by hour?
	What do you	want to do?
	does everybody	have that?
	Does everyone	understand what you are going to be doing?
Anyone	that DOESN'T know?	

Table 5.60

*Task Specification 2 Cohesive Devices*

Theme	Rheme
Think about interactions that you	have <sup>1</sup>
the times that you	have to be with kids <sup>1</sup>
Think about your	specials <sup>2</sup>
I don't care—you	decide as a group <sup>3</sup> —
you	decide how you want to do it <sup>3</sup>
you	want to go by hour?
What do you	want to do?
does everybody	have that <sup>3</sup> ?
Does everyone	understand what you are going to be doing <sup>task</sup> ?
Anyone	that DOESN'T know?

For ELLs, these cohesive devices are very complex, and can refer to a number of different things, that depend greatly on independent student experience. The teacher is indicating that students must decide *as a group...how... to do it*, but alludes vaguely to what exactly they can show, with no concrete examples to rely

upon. It is difficult to see the flow of information in this discourse as it is written, which makes it all the more confusing in spoken discourse.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* In the interpersonal metafunction, the majority of the questions used in task specification, are the leading questions that are rhetorically asking students how they want to approach the task. The showing questions give students the option of answering—the teacher adds a small pause after each question, but no students respond.

Table 5.61

*Task Specification 2 Interpersonal Metafunction*

	Type of Question	Question
Information Request: Showing	Y/N	does everybody have that?
	Y/N	Does everyone understand what you are going to be doing?
	WH	Anyone that DOESN'T know?
Information Request: Leading	Y/N	you want to go by hour?
	WH	What do you want to do?

These showing questions are being used to specify and orient the entire class to understand the task and the specific details the students can include in their answers. The leading questions and statements are the most specific details given to the students about how to fulfill the task. These sparse details may not be enough for these students, but unless students ask for further clarification, this is the specification they receive.

*Ideational Metafunction.* In the ideational metafunction in Table 5.62, the teacher provides more specific details about how the students can use material processes to achieve the goal of the writing task, and in the form of goals lists content that can be included in the list to complete the writing task. The processes include *describing, listing* and *breaking down* the goals: mainly *the day*, which may include details such as *interactions...with (other) kids, their specials*, and the *things that happen during the day*. However, we can see in this instance that the goals are cohesive devices that do not necessarily have clear correspondence to the above lecture, and may not necessarily have correspondence to the prior knowledge shared by students at this school. A number of these cohesive devices do not have clear referents, and could mean a number of different things to different students.

Table 5.62

*Task Specification 2 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
But you are going to	break down	the day
you are going to	describe	the day
	start listing	the things that happen during a day at Eagleland

In this specification stage, the teacher has provided some strategies, through processes and goals, alluded to complex, multi-faceted concepts with cohesive devices, and with leading questions. These language resources provided however, lack specific detail and rely heavily on the prior knowledge of students and their ability to verbalize these concepts, even at the basic listing stage.

### 5.7.6 Task Negotiation 3

In this stage of task negotiation, the teacher is taking the position of working with the students to expand upon the specification stage and provide more information about how to fulfill the task. Although the teacher is consistent when discussing student responsibility, this is an exhibition of a whole class activity of talking through addressing the writing task.

Table 5.63

#### *Task Negotiation 3*

[Teacher continues lecture, but shifts to focusing more attention on students]  
 If I ask you—like I say if we were going to write the day we were going to do it just like this, day in the life of a fifth-grader at Eagleland school  
 what would you be telling the kids in China?  
 About what your day is like. you don't just say we come to school we go home we have lots of homework right?  
 <<Students laughing>>  
 that wouldn't describe anything. you've got to have some details in there, you've got to be specific, maybe there is things= like I say you done other times you have schools where you find out— like you have several years ago when technology was just coming in, even in Threed around the Cerulean City area, and in Indiana some schools didn't even have a computer, and our school had all kinds of computers, it's just things like that

*Textual Metafunction.* In the text negotiation, the teacher changes the approach to the task and involves herself in the completion of the task, orienting the students to cooperate to brainstorm together with *we* being most important in the Theme, but quickly shifting it back to *you* when discussing what to include in the writing task. In addition to this, we can see in the Theme that not is information about the writer included, but also the subject of comparison task, in this case, comparing schools with the students' school, and other elements of comparison:

*things*. What is also occurring, with the group responsibility, the teacher is framing it as a group reporting an audience, in this case, the audience of *kids in China*. The teacher is connecting this to an authentic task, which has potential of occurring later in the year.

Table 5.64

*Task Negotiation 3 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Collective Responsibility	like I say if we	're going to write the day
	we	're going to do it just like this
	we	come to school
	we	go home
	we	have lots of homework right?
	our	school had all kinds of computers
Student Responsibility	what would you	be telling the kids in China?
	you	don't just say we come to school we go home we have lots of homework right?
	you	've got to have some details in there
	you	've got to be specific
	like I say you	done other times
	you	have schools where you find out
	like you	have several years ago when technology was just coming in

One interesting feature is in the use of model sentence: *you don't just say we come to school...we...we...*, this is framing the model writing activity as not encompassing the students' individual day, but giving a more general description of the day to day life of an elementary school student, which is a different assignment than the one originally posed: *describe the day of a fifth grader at Eagleland elementary*. There is some ambiguity in this prompt, and adding to this, the teacher continues to emphasize what *you*, the student, will be producing in *your* writing, and



referencing *your* experiences. Even at this stage of the writing and planning stage, this can be confusing for ELLs.

The cohesive devices in this discourse sample show how complex this task has become, and through the negotiation stage, we can see how important it is for the teacher to provide details in order to make students aware of her expectations. The teacher provides some clarification through cohesive devices to tell students what she doesn't want to see in their writing, but does not provide adequate information about what types of language she does want to see. The examples provided about what not to write: *we come to school, we go home we have lots of homework*, are not detailed enough descriptions to justify why these are inappropriate responses. The fifth grade teacher does not use this opportunity to show how to modify these responses to add more detail to the discourse. Her example, about the difference in technology in Indiana schools, is not worded like written discourse nor in a way that could clearly provide scaffolding for ELL students.

Table 5.65

*Task Negotiation 3 Cohesive Devices*

Theme	Rheme
If I ask you	
if we were	going to write the day <sup>TASK</sup>
we	're going to do it just like
this	day in the life of a fifth-grader at Eagleland school <sup>task</sup>
what would you	be telling
the kids in China?	
	About what your day is like <sup>TASK</sup>
you	don't just say
we	come to school <sup>1</sup>
we	go home <sup>2</sup>
we	have lots of homework right <sup>3</sup> ?
that <sup>123</sup>	wouldn't describe anything
you	've got to have some details <sup>4</sup> in there
you	've got to be specific <sup>4</sup>
	maybe there is things <sup>4</sup>
and in INDIANA some schools	didn't even have a computer <sup>5DIFF</sup>
and our school	had all kinds of computers <sup>5ALIKE</sup>
it's just things <sup>4</sup>	like that <sup>5</sup>

These cohesive devices could be the basis of further deconstruction and scaffolding for students, but only this spoken discourse is inadequate for list building for this compare and contrast assignment.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* In this negotiation phase, there are very few leading question used, with the majority of information communicated through statements and conditional statements, which could also be argued that these are showing questions, but will not be considered for this analysis. Again, these questions are just posed to help students think about what to write, and to lead

them to fulfilling this task. In this case, the leading questions are posed to help students consider the potential audience in this writing task, which had not been emphasized much in the previous stages.

Table 5.65

*Task Negotiation 3 Interpersonal Metafunction*

Type of Question		Question
Information Request: Leading	WH	what would you be telling the kids in China?
	Y/N	you don't just say we come to school we go home we have lots of homework right?

The leading questions here not only indicate potential content, but also the consideration for the audience and this also comes with other considerations about what is appropriate to write to the students. The teacher wants the students to consider providing details for this potentially foreign audience, but does not give any further explanation about describing these different factors for her students.

*Ideational Metafunction.* Processes here continue to communicate the main responsibilities involved in this writing task, through writing, telling, and describing. We can see through the processes that there is still emphasis put on being able to *describe* within this writing task the details of the day. We can again see the goals being illustrative of what the students can begin to compose within their lists: the day, details, when technology was just coming in, & being specific. However, very little expansion on these goals is provided, despite occurring during the negotiation phase of this curriculum genre.

Table 5.66

*Task Negotiation 3 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
If I ask you—like I say if we were going to	write	the day
what would you	be telling	the kids in China?
that	wouldn't describe	anything
you	've got to have	some details
you	've got to be	specific

This negotiation task, the last of this excerpt, before students are given the chance to start working independently, starts to give some details about what the teacher does *not* want to see in the students' writing activities, but again, provides little detail about what she wants to see, leaving this up to the student. We can start to see that additional details about the task such as consideration of audience, position of author, and amount of detail for a special audience are discussed. This task negotiation stage can go into more detail about these elements, but in this teachers' discourse, it is limited to this.

**5.7.7 Task Specification 3**

In this final stage of this classroom excerpt, we see that the teacher shifts into task specification once again as a student asks for clarification about the task at hand. The student is asking for clarification about the actual demands of the writing task, and not simply about creating a compare and contrast list. The teacher has reiterated that the first step in this task is to make a list, but the students still require further clarification. The teacher takes this opportunity to discuss possible topics students can discuss about the writing task, using many different cohesive

devices and through the textual metafunction, and characterizes processes and goals again before having students work independently on the task.

Table 5.67

*Task Specification 3*

[T is ready to let students start working in groups on creating lists, and asks if there is any need for clarification]

T: Did somebody have a question?

S: So we are just going to write what it's like at Eagleland?

T: For the time—you get to school, or you know if it's before school=once again, our day here starts kids get to school at 7:30 right?

Now if there's something—some of you guys—sometimes you have things BEFORE school at that time—depending on if you are like in spell goal or something, if that happens to fall in there you might want to put that.

you know I come early because of—or we have other kids that come early so once again, because when you go to do the actual writing, the comparing and the contrasts that you are going to do, it's going to be YOUR day, and you may have something that's different than other people based on what you do—like I said some of you at 2:30 get on the bus to go home

some of you DON'T get on the bus and go home.

some of you have things here that you're still here for the extended day.

so you've got to make sure on your list, if it pertains TO YOU, when you are doing the list,

you're going to put it on your paper.

alright?

*Textual Metafunction.* In the Theme position, we can see that the teacher, again is directing writing suggestions towards students with the use of you, but this is often with the generalization of some of you, which may make it difficult for students to correctly interpret which parts of the classroom discourse can be useful for students when taking notes about potential language resources.

In this final specification stage, the teacher is providing more details about what to write and what to include in the graphic organizer and the actual writing

task. The responsibility, again, is on the students to write specifically about their own experience: *it's going to be YOUR day*, when the students start writing the actual task. This explanation is now planting it in the experience of the individual student, not students in general, which may be a more appropriate approach if the audience is not the teacher. The *kids* construction is a general statement for a general audience, and is a unique sentence thus far in the discourse. This may be confusing for ELLs, since this is a general statement that is true for all students. This could be the basis for an example sentence that is written on the board to scaffold for all students, and then provide options such as the ones mentioned in the latter half of the discourse, and represented by cohesive devices.

Table 5.68

*Task Specification 3 Textual Metafunction*

	Theme	Rheme
Collective Responsibility	our	day here starts
	kids	get to school at 7:30 right?
Student Responsibility	you	get to school
	you	have things BEFORE school at that time
	depending on if you	are like in spell goal or something
	you know I	come early because of
	because when you	go to do the actual writing
	the comparing and the contrasts that you	are going to do
	it 's going to be YOUR	day
	and you	may have something that's different than other people based on what you do
	like I said some of you	at 2:30 get on the bus to go home
	some of you	DON'T get on the bus and go home
	some of you	have things here that you're still here for the extended day
	so you	've got to make sure on your list if it pertains TO YOU
	when you	are doing the list
you	're going to put it on your paper	

Table 5.69  
 Task Specification 3 Cohesive Devices

Theme	Rheme
S: So we are just going to write what it's like at Eagleland? <sup>TASK</sup>	
you	get to school <sup>1</sup>
if it	's before school <sup>2</sup>
our day here	starts <sup>1</sup>
kids	get to school at 7:30 right? <sup>1</sup>
sometimes you	have things BEFORE school <sup>2</sup>
depending on if you	are like in spell goal or something <sup>3</sup>
if that <sup>3</sup>	happens to fall in there <sup>2</sup>
you	might want to put that <sup>3</sup>
you	know I come early because of <sup>3</sup>
or we	have other kids that come early <sup>2</sup> so once again
because when you	go to do the actual writing <sup>TASK</sup>
the comparing and the contrasts <sup>TASK</sup> that you	are going to do
it <sup>TASK</sup>	's going to be YOUR day <sup>TASK123456</sup>
and you	may have something that's different than other people <sup>4</sup>
based on what you	do
some of you	at 2:30 get on the bus to go home <sup>5</sup>
some of you	DON'T get on the bus and go home <sup>6</sup>
some of you	have things here that you're still here for the extended day <sup>6</sup>
so you	've got to make sure on your list <sup>TASKLIST</sup>
when you	are doing the list <sup>TASKLIST</sup>
you	're going to put it <sup>123456</sup> on your paper <sup>TASK</sup>

The cohesive devices, again, are condensing many different elements of what students are to include in their writing to *it*, *your paper*, and the *list*, and requiring that some, or all of the topics mentioned in the discourse are included in the appropriate students' list, and ultimately, their writing task. In this excerpt, we can see the greatest condensation of information in what students need to put in their paper: *you're going to put it on your paper*, where *it* has potential reference to all of



the referents that was mentioned in this section of the discourse. These examples that were listed by the teacher may be helpful for students who are paying close attention, but without specific examples, visual representations or additional scaffolds, the flow of information and which piece of information the cohesive devices are referring to may be lost to ELLs.

*Interpersonal Metafunction.* In this specification phase, the teacher is mainly lecturing, and instead of using showing questions to confirm the understanding and experiences of students, or asking about their experiences, she is telling them about what they might do. Students are then to similarly write about their own experiences according to this lecture in their own writing.

Table 5.70

*Task Specification 3 Interpersonal Metafunction*

	Type of Question	Question
Information	Y/N	Did somebody have a question?
Request: Leading	Y/N	our day here starts kids get to school at 7:30 right?

In the final specification stage, the teacher is answer the question posed by the student, so the use of further questions may not have been appropriate in this case, even though the use of questions in this teachers' discourse was most used in the task specification stages.

*Ideational Metafunction.* In this instance of the textual metafunction in the task specification stage, we can see that there are many more instances of the use of material processes, focusing on the actions of students and the need for students to

describe the goals accomplished through material processes in their writing. Again, we can see that the listing of all of the goals in the ideational metafunction provides us with a roadmap for the students to focus on to create their list for their writing task: *getting to school, things before school, your day*, things that are different from other students, *activities* that occur for students that go home, don't go home, or those who stay for the extended day. However, all of these goals, again, are obfuscated by cohesive devices, which have referents occurring within this stage, and those that refer directly back to the task, but with little explanation on what specific details can be provided to provide further elaboration for students writing.

Table 5.71

*Task Specification 3 Ideational Metafunction*

Participants	Material Processes	Goals
you	get to	school
		our day here
	starts	
kids	get	to school at 7:30 right?
you might want to	put	that
when you	go to do	the actual writing
		the comparing and the contrasts
that you	are going to do	
some of you at 2:30	get on	the bus to go home
some of you DON'T	get on	the bus and go home
when you	are doing	the list
you	're going to put	it on your paper

The listing of the material processes and goals in this teachers' discourse, if students are taking notes and listening, would be very helping in fulfilling the list for this compare and contrast assignment. If the teacher would have featured visuals along with this discourse, it would have provided additional resources for the students besides relying solely on spoken discourse. The difference between spoken and written discourse requires a great deal of scaffolding and modeling for ELLs, and although this is only the list creation stage, this final task specification stage can start to lay the groundwork for expansion on a simple topic list, expanding into vocabulary, transitions, verbs and other language resources that could be helpful for students.

## **5.8 Fifth Grade Teacher Analysis.**

This teacher has a very distinctive approach to teaching, with a very teacher centered approach, strong lecture and providing students with expectations about writing. However, the preceding analysis shows that many of these well intentioned discourse patterns may cause confusion for ELLs, who may not be able to follow complex discourse portrayed solely through spoken discourse.

### **5.8.1 Textual Metafunction Analysis**

Although the teacher is consistent at including the responsibility of the speaker in the Thematic position in her discourse, the rate of speech is often so fast that the students may not be able to recognize this in natural speech functions. The speech directed at the students with the use of *you*, is often used by the teacher to provide potential language resources to the students, with the corresponding

information coming in the Rheme position. The Theme is meant to be a clue to the listener (Christie & Derewianka, 2010) that relevant information, new information, reiteration or reinforcement of information will follow in the Rheme in the form of cohesive devices or expanding on those devices. Granted this is not as prominent in spoken dialogue, but the consistent patterns seen in this discourse reinforce the emphasis on the student to be ultimately responsible for the completion of their texts.

Like we have seen in third grade teacher the fifth grade teacher also uses many cohesive devices with unclear referents with her students. The teacher directs her students to pay attention to what occurs within the Rheme through the flow of information, but often this is obfuscated by unclear connection between the cohesive devices and the referents. If the teacher was aware of the ease in which the flow of information can become incoherent and complex, teacher discourse may become more focused and purposeful, keeping these elements of language in mind.

The consistent use of general referents such as *things, stuff, this, it*, may potentially cause students confusion concerning what language resources they refer to. Throughout the analysis, the cohesive devices tend to stay consistent within the same curriculum stage, but at times they do not have a specific referent or have not been discussed recently by the teacher, with the exception of the overarching question prompt. The use of cohesive devices must be recognized by teachers as being an area of potential confusion for ELLs. This is one of the pitfalls of spoken discourse, and this is exacerbated when spoken discourse is one of the only

resources available for students, this merits the adaptation of a multi-modal approach, with visuals and modeling written language. Considering what we have learned from the textual metafunction, I believe that teachers can be more mindful of the way they organize their spoken discourse considering things such as textual organization old and new information cohesive devices and having clear referents that students can understand and implement in their writing.

### **5.8.2 Interpersonal Metafunction Analysis**

The use of WH & Y/N interrogatives in this teachers' discourse showed that the majority of the questions being asked were acting as leading questions, which did not require student input, even in the case of WH-interrogatives being used. Leading questions were used most meaningfully by this teacher in using the leading function, which was designed to help jump start students' thought processes about what to write about and complete the task at hand. However, these leading questions did not follow up or shift into showing questions, which could potentially provide all students with language resources needed to produce writing, or more effectively complete their list building task. Showing questions that required the contributions from students could illustrate how students are constructing their understanding of the language needed for the task, and the use of these questions could act as a way of orienting students to the formal language use needed to complete the task.

The interpersonal metafunction can be used to interact with students to negotiate their current understanding and conceptualizations of language and is

crucial in successfully scaffolding and providing language resources for these students. This can be done effectively with interrogative questions within the scope of classroom discourse whether it is with WH or Y/N interrogatives or showing or leading questions. If the teacher uses questions consistently with limited interaction however, this is neglecting an important resource that can be taken advantage of to bridge the gap in language resources and provide models for academic language in writing, even through spoken discourse.

### **5.8.3 Ideational Metafunction Analysis**

Throughout this discourse analysis, the use of material processes has been highlighted within the writing task and requirements of writing. Cohesive devices continue to be featured in goals of the ideational metafunction, and do have referents that are featured in the discourse. However, many of these can benefit from further elaboration, and by expanding upon the material processes and goals in writing, this can provide students even more language resources to facilitate stronger writing, and with even more details, which was one of the most important elements of writing that was emphasized by the teacher.

In the classroom discourse, the processes and goals, when listed, help to provide almost a road map of what is needed to accomplish the goal of the writing task. Through the use of modeling how to write and expanding upon cohesive devices, goals and processes would be an excellent approach to building the field by expanding upon ELLs' prior knowledge about the language resources that are available to each. In particular, participants, goals and processes can be very helpful

in providing scaffolding of academic language to the students, providing target vocabulary, and providing opportunities for the teacher to deconstruct the goals of the task, which are often cohesive devices, and can be elaborated upon using multiple language resources and scaffolding into academic writing. Not only can the spoken discourse be used to orient, negotiate, and specify, with the proper scaffolding these can be used with other teaching materials such as word walls story maps graphic organizers to build the field and provide academic language that all ELLs can use.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

Through this language analysis, a more careful look at language has shown that teachers can be more aware of their language use in the classroom, due to the nature of spoken classroom discourse. It is well known that spoken discourse is more disorganized than written discourse, but the fact that classroom discourse is a more structured experience means that the discourse should also be held to a greater standard (Christie, 2005; Christie & Derewianka, 2010). Scrutinizing language through a discourse analysis may help teachers to further evaluate their own usage of spoken language in the classroom, and determine if the expectations they are putting forth to their students is a fair request or not.

One of the most troubling outcomes is how quickly and complex the flow of information can become in classroom discourse, and how important it is for cohesive devices to have clear referents to facilitate greater comprehension for ELLs. When these cohesive devices are not represented multi-modally, this reduces ELLs

to only relying on the spoken discourse and listening domain to follow the flow of information. Teachers who are conscious of this can better structure their spoken discourse, and this can also be helpful in modeling how these are used in texts as well.

The use of material processes can provide a great resource for teachers in showing students what they need to write about: goals, and how they can do so: processes, and from there build the additional language resources and models to fulfill the tasks. This is useful in the pre-writing stage as well as the revision stages of writing, as could be seen in the data. With additional attention to language use by teachers, the potential to identify these language resources for different topics, approaches and audiences could become clearer.

These analyses can help teachers to be more mindful of the language they use in the classroom, and better communicate to ELLs about the importance of language resources, with a better idea of how their own language is influencing their students' writing. The scrutiny placed on this classroom discourse can help to sculpt it into a more "structured experience" (Christie, 2005), and help teachers to better use language in their writing classes, develop multiple approaches to language and incorporate it multi-modally to help ELLs better utilize academic language in their writing.



## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

Elementary writing for ELLs is a central area of need in rural elementary schools. The population of ELLs continues to increase in all areas of the US, including parts of the country where ELLs have previously not been present (Berube, 2000; Hill & Flynn, 2004; Yoesel, 2010). Even in the district of study where ELLs have a longer history, the teaching approaches of teachers maintain that the ELLs, in many cases, are in need of the same instruction as their English Only (EO) students (de Jong & Harper, 2005). Coupled with the lack of expert support in rural districts for ELLs, along with the teacher's ideologies about language, ELLs are being underserved. The impact of the writing discourse observed and analyzed in this study demonstrates several different phenomenon that can impact future writing instruction in elementary classrooms for ELLs.

### 6.2 Discussion of Findings

#### 6.2.1 Agency in Writing for English Language Learners

For ELLs, having agency in writing is important when accomplishing the goals of writing tasks (de Oliveira & Silva, 2013; Helman, 2012; Meier, 2011; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2013). ELLs must have agency in writing and part of invoking this agency is allowing students the option of using their L1 in writing production.

Although the ELLs will need to produce writing in English for tests, and in classroom assessments, the absence of the L1 in these classrooms suggests that it was tacitly or openly discouraged. Without access to this valuable language resource, the writing discourse in the classroom is limited to serving only the English Only (EO) population in the classroom. This ideology and related conditions may communicate that only EO students have the valued language experiences in writing. ELLs will also feel that, by extension, their experiences, if they are not compatible or comparable to their EO counterparts are less valued. ELLs may feel that the teacher does not value their language experiences in languages other than English. Teachers that are able to help students utilize their own language in their writing tasks will produce a beneficial writing environment and create more meaningful writing task and experience (de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007; Gibbons, 2009).

### **6.2.2 Writing Becomes More Complex, but Teachers are Providing Less Support**

As grade levels increase, teachers tend to release more responsibility in teaching for achievement in literacy (Fisher & Frey, 2007). Scaffolding and guided instruction is to be gradually reduced according to the capabilities and the responsibility that students must shoulder in meeting the requirements of writing assignments and assessments. This means that the writing instruction in the writing classroom will become sparser, and more narrow due to the pressures of assessments and classroom standards (Center on Education Policy, 2006; King & Zucker, 2005). However, the linguistic complexity of writing increases with grade

level, and the sophistication of produced texts and acquisition of academic language requires greater guidance and scaffolding from the teachers (Gibbons, 2009).

As can be seen in both classrooms, there is a pattern of less support as ELLs become more proficient in the language, despite the fact that as linguistic complexity increases, the content complexity also increases. One of the main differences in the discourse patterns of the third and fifth grade teacher was the shift in responsibility from a group task to individual responsibility, with the fifth grade teacher talking consistently about the individual responsibility of students in fulfilling the writing tasks. In interviews, observations and language discourse analysis, when the language tasks are becoming more complex and demanding, teachers fall back onto their ideologies, their beliefs about the assessments or their approaches to teaching EO students, and apply this to their ELL teaching approaches. As students become more comfortable with everyday social language, and if they are testing as level four proficient ELLs, then teachers may not realize that they require more explicit support with academic language, specifically written academic language. Although the release of responsibility to students is needed in later grades as students become more proficient writers and responsible students, the counter to this is that ELLs that are reaching proficiency, moving from level four (advanced) to level five (proficient), require more explicit support and scaffolding to accurately produce academic language in writing, and to use it in content areas, like English Language Arts, Science and History (Gibbons, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2006). Instead

ELLs are given the least amount of support, unless they self-advocate for their language needs in the classroom.

Through interviews, teachers mentioned that ELLs, as well as EO students were lacking in vocabulary development, and this may be an effect of their individual ideologies of helping students gain independence in meeting the assessments. Teachers are striving to give quality instructions to all students, and interpret the specific needs of their ELLs, dealing with content specific vocabulary, to be the same as all of their students, and so they see no need to provide additional support for these students, since they are largely conceived as the same.

### **6.2.3 Writing Process and Six Traits**

The emphasis on the use of the stages in the writing process, such as brainstorming and graphic organizer usage may have led to limiting of language modeling in the case of the fifth grade teacher. In the classroom discourse, the teacher emphasized that students should just focus on creating a list of compare and contrast items, but students were confused about whether to produce full sentences, like those heard in the classroom discourse, or information similar to note taking. Without the pressure of the brainstorm, draft, revise, publish system in place, the teacher may have been able to take advantage of this to show model constructions as well as facilitate brainstorming. The natural course of the teaching discourse seemed to be held back for the purpose of maintaining the historic process.

Almost completely absent from the fifth grade teacher, but palpable in the third grade teacher's classroom was the usage of the six traits to provide focus to

the revision of writing occurring in the process approach, namely the focus on: ideas and content, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions. The use of the metalanguage based on this curriculum initiative saturated the third grade teachers' classroom, while the fifth grade teacher made very few mentions in her ELA lessons. The use of a common language to characterize the use of the six traits is something that is very powerful in communicating the expectations of students at different points in the writing process (Spandel, 2001, 2005). This consistent use of metalanguage is helpful for ELLs, in that it helps to provide specificity for students, and details in how to improve their writing.

However, when the teacher focuses too much on the use of the six traits across all of the different genres of writing, there is some miscommunication, and over application of the traits in potentially inappropriate places, such as the use of voice in a formal letter to the principal. The teacher also acknowledges that this may be inappropriate at times, but does not make changes to the assignment or modifications to the formula. She acquiesces to the writing process frameworks and school literacy initiatives that accompany it. This is the only approach that the teacher has available to her, and having no alternative, she maintains it.

Curricular initiatives that are tied to the process approach can be helpful for teachers of ELLs, if they have the knowledge about the types of language resources that are needed, and that there is a difference in instruction students will need versus their EO counterparts. However, if teachers are relying solely on a single writing approach to fulfill the needs of their students, they may be limited by this

approach, and not be able to make adjustments according to the needs that they perceive their students to have. These teaching approaches are supporting ELLs in the same way as they are supporting EO students, but no real diversification or considerations for ELLs are made.

#### **6.2.4 The State of Writing in the Classroom**

The status of writing in the classroom is given more attention due to the coming assessments, but the instruction that accompanies this emphasis is limited. In these observations, the writing assignments gradually became more focused on the prompts that were associated with the eventual test preps, and not inclusive of the experiences of students. Although the students are given the opportunities through the influences of process writing to brainstorm, outline and revise their writing along with the metalanguage of the six traits in the early elementary classroom there are few authentic models for approaching writing. Moreover, there are limited ways in which students can approach writing with few language resources modeled and made available for students. Although the writing process is supposed to involve the prior knowledge and experience of students, the classroom discourse about writing demonstrated that students are directed towards a model text, sometimes several, but are dissuaded from use of additional language resources to illustrate the making ways of making meaning in writing.

#### **6.2.5 Use of L1 and Cultural Backgrounds in Discourse and Supporting Students**

In the course of the interview, classroom observations and discourse analysis, there were no observed uses of the students' L1, specific references to their unique

cultural or prior experiences (besides passing comments such as “some of you know what it’s like to be from a different culture”), or references to the use of the L1 in the classroom. The teachers’ own ideologies about L1 and/or L2 language use are manifested in their teaching approaches. The use of the L1 in any writing instruction was not considered at all, even in the instruction of low level ELLs. Any use of the L1 in group settings was considered to be used only for mischief, and an unspoken English-only approach was present in both of these classrooms. This neglect of the L1 in these classrooms may communicate the idea that the use of languages other than English are not included in potential language resources in school texts, which pushes against the notion of Systemic Functional Linguistics of language being a socially mediated meaning making system.

The teachers felt that the use of the L1 would not be serving their students’ needs, or would be improper as their students needed the classroom to be a place, according to some teachers, the only place, that students were able to use English. Although teachers could utilize their students’ language in some way, by allowing the use of the L1 in group work, coordinating with volunteers or support staff, or encouraging some involvement of the students’ L1 through classroom resources, teachers preferred use of English during instructional negotiation between students over the students’ use of their L1.

### **6.3 Implications for Practice**

This research study shows that the practices of teachers are being homogenized for both their EO and ELL students. While these practices may be best

for their EO students, this approach does not play to the specific needs of their ELLs and can be detrimental in their literacy development of both their L1 and L2 (de Jong & Harper, 2005).

When considering potential practices based on these discourse patterns, genre-based pedagogy can help to fill the gap in classroom discourse and help teachers attend to classroom discourse in planning and implementation of their instructional practice. The Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) based discourse analysis provides the resources to apply the types of language being used to the classroom through observing how the teacher characterizes language. Genre-based pedagogy shows how the linguistic tools used in SFL can be applied to teaching. As discussed in Chapter 2, this teaching approach, known as the Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC) and it provides students with clearer language resources for writing. This allows teachers to develop their own metalanguage to communicate the expectations of language more clearly. The TLC is composed of three stages: Deconstruction, Joint Construction, and Individual Construction (Figure 2.1 Teaching Learning Cycle). Originally developed by Rothery (1994), a number of SFL based works reference this cycle and have used it in their research and have observed it in classrooms, used it in genre-pedagogy based teacher training, potential teaching plans or curriculum programs (Brisk, 2015; de Oliveira & Iddings, 2014; Gibbons, 2002; Martin & Rose, 2014). This cycle emphasizes the active role that teachers can have in text modeling and guiding students to discovering promising language



resources and approaches to writing that can lead to better use of academic language.

As this study demonstrated a dearth of understanding around specific approaches for ELLs, operationalizing the SFL and TLC is a necessary and recommended step. Assisting teachers in identifying, observing and reflecting on their own language use can be instrumental in defining how language is understood by ELLs and how it restricts the expansive nature that writing embodies. This reflexive cycle can provide teachers with a structured approach to writing assignments, and help support students with specific language resources for each writing assignment, and interact with students more closely through the TLC.

### **6.3.1 Metalanguage**

In this research, one of the most powerful approaches observed was the use of metalanguage in the classroom, especially when it came to writing instruction. The reliance of the six traits in the classroom gave students a solid foundation in which to improve their writing within the framework of process writing. While this helped students to identify the areas that needed improvement in their writing, this did little to offer language resources that can help improve their writing. There was a great deal of the use of listing of words, and word walls in the classroom environments. The listing of these words were limited to descriptive “purple” words, but these did not include other parts of speech, such as verbs, pronouns, adverbs, and were not categorized by topic, such as letter, story or essay. By creating additional metalanguage that references the types of language resources, such as those

featured in the ideational metafunction: participants, materials processes and goals, the teacher can also create metalanguage that is organic to the classroom, and appropriate for each type of task. For example, the letter writing model could be the basis of the creation of a list of material processes used in the students' writing, and this could be reflected in the teachers' classroom discourse to reinforce these vocabulary words. This approach would be very helpful in addressing some of the most difficult areas for the teacher to explain.

### **6.3.2 Organization and Clarity**

After observing the patterns of discourse in the classroom, the organization of information and use of cohesive devices showed that not only are these important in writing, but are also important in the discourse of writing in the classroom. Paying attention to the textual metafunction shows how quickly the flow of information within discourse and cohesive devices can become obscured and difficult to follow for ELLs. In teacher's discourse, these cohesive devices should be represented clearly and coherently, re-iterating the important elements to students using explicit language, not constantly obscured by "this", "that", "it", and other non-specific cohesive devices. This can be supported by providing students with multi-modal approaches and purposeful questions to determine and confirm the flow of information, and encourage the progression of writing.

Teachers also characterize the responsibilities of students through their discourse, and this characterization of communal responsibility and student responsibility that was found in the discourse can also be included in teacher

pedagogy development. Teachers can shape their discourse around fostering communal and student responsibility and organize classes accordingly. The TLC, for instance, orients the teaching in the first two cycles, deconstruction and joint construction, around the communal approach to the modeling and analysis of the language used in the class, and then the students are responsible for writing of their own product, after being provided helpful language and writing resources.

The use of questions can be powerful in the classroom. The use of interrogative questions in the classroom elicits knowledge from students, and involves them more actively in the classroom lectures. This approach can act as a way to activate prior knowledge without volunteering too much information, or outright telling students what to think or write. However, in the observations and discourse, many of the questions used within discourse were yes-no Interrogatives, often with the desired answer being yes, or WH-Interrogatives, but these questions did not allot enough time for students to answer these questions.

Teachers who are more aware of their own spoken discourse and make considerations for students of other languages will be more mindful of their spoken discourse and how they can connect this to their writing teaching. If teachers are aware of the unorganized nature of their discourse and the importance of the communication of expectations through this conscientious and well-articulated discourse, they can be more purposeful in their speech.

### **6.3.3 Importance of Multi-Modal Teaching**

The use of spoken discourse in the classroom should be assisted with visuals in order to aid comprehension for ELL students (Houk, 2005). The use of spoken discourse, accompanied with a visual model text is helpful. The use of questions can be supported with visuals, or writing these on the board, and used in tandem with graphic organizers to fill in information. Following up on student questions and opening up opportunities for discourse can be effective in confirming student comprehension, as well as giving students the opportunities to engage in questions without fear of criticism.

### **6.3.4 Realizing the Different Needs of ELLs**

Teachers in these classrooms were aware of the differences in the language backgrounds of students, but continued to emphasize the same expectations being placed on ELLs. The urgency for students to perform in English pressured the teachers to move more quickly and to homogenize their instruction to all students. Teachers who are aware of the language backgrounds of students and are comfortable with the use of language in order to greater develop their literacy in English will help their students in developing writing proficiency in English (Brisk, 2015; de Oliveira & Anathases, 2006; Filimore & Snow, 2000; Gibbons, 2009; Schleppegrell, 2006). The idea of just good teaching, teaching ELLs is to be done by specialists, or that ELL students have the same difficulties of EO students, ignores the competencies of their ELLs and their specific needs, and may have long lasting detrimental effects on the development of their L1 and L2 literacy abilities (de Jong

& Harper, 2005; Harper & de Jong, 2004; Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Wiley, 2005). Teachers who do not feel comfortable with speaking or are unable to teach in the students' L1 do not need to mandate a classroom with hostility towards the use of other languages in the classroom, but can reserve time for it in group work or to facilitate language development with the strategic use of grouping students or writing tasks that may include the use of the L1, as a way to scaffold language development.

This analysis of discourse and of teachers practices is uncommon, especially the discourse of monolingual elementary teachers, and has revealed patterns of discourse that teachers may not be aware. This discourse analysis has shown that teachers who are aware of their language discourse and the needs of their students, can be reflexive in their discourse and teaching approaches, and provide more illustrative language instruction that is conducive to meeting ELL student needs. Specifically, the inductive analysis detailed the external and internal factors that influence elementary teachers' writing instruction. The deductive analysis demonstrated how teachers mediate language, and how their ideologies about language learning and writing about ELLs restricts the use of the students' L1. Teachers can be inclusive of ELLs by allowing the use of students' L1 in writing activities, but should not outlaw the use of the L1 as it can impede writing development.

#### **6.4 Areas of Further Research**

Areas of research that were not able to be conducted in this research include 1) genre-based pedagogy teacher training 2) teacher attitudes about multilingual education and use of L1 in the classroom, and 3) having teachers examine their spoken discourse patterns in the classroom. Due to limited time and resources, these areas of research listed above were not adequately explored. Co-developing a curriculum based around a teacher's discourse patterns and working with these teachers would be a great step in identifying the strengths of genre based pedagogy in a U.S. based writing classroom with a mixed rural population, particularly in these three areas.

Offering pre-service and in-service teachers additional approaches to writing, such as the implementation of genre-based writing pedagogy can offer teachers different perspectives on the use of language resources, modeling and scaffolding that can be used in fulfilling the expectations of writing assignments. Amplification of current teaching practices and alternate approaches can afford teachers greater freedoms in how they approach their ELL student community, and help to offer more descriptive details to characterize language usage for various writing genres featured in the writing classroom.

Particularly in the Indiana context, teacher attitudes about multilingual education and use of L1 in the classroom can be informed by this research to show how directly related the ideologies that teachers hold about their ELL students are reflected in the teacher practices in the classroom. Through professional

development and teacher preparation that challenges the ideologies of teachers, teachers may be more flexible about their ideologies and the use of students' L1 in the classroom. This can also encourage teachers to be reflexive about their teaching practices, encouraging greater coordination with ESL and writing specialists, to create better materials and assignments for both ELL and EO students, and support these students within the writing classroom.

Further discussion and scrutiny of teachers' in-class practices and attitudes should be conducted to challenge teachers' existing ideologies about the needs of ELLs in the writing classroom relative to other students' needs and abilities. These would be instructive in changing the mindset and justifications for these practices, and address these concerns in pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher professional development.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This research explored the discourse of Midwest rural teachers of ELLs focusing on writing discourse in the third and fifth grade classroom. The findings here show that teachers always have their students' best interests in mind, and are working tirelessly to meet the needs of all of their students in light of increasing pressure from outside influences such as assessments, educational policies and from their own ideologies and backgrounds. Through this analysis, potential improvements and new approaches to the teaching of writing for ELLs and EO students have been proposed, as well as illuminating areas of teacher beliefs and ideologies that may be challenged in the future. These considerations can help to

provide a road map for teachers of ELLs in rural communities, and help teachers examine their own language usage and teaching practices. In the future, more SFL teaching practices and analysis can help to design curriculum and writing practices, and add more details and guidance for ELLs and their teachers. Greater attention to teacher's writing discourse can offer ELLs the meaning making language resources they need to improve their writing while simultaneously changing teacher ideologies about elementary writing.



## REFERENCES

## REFERENCES

- Applebee, A. N. (1986). Problems in process approaches: Toward a reconceptualization of process instruction. In A. R. Petrosky & D. Bartholomae (Eds.), *The teaching of writing* (pp. 95-113). Chicago, IL: National Society for the Study of Education.
- Adger, C. T., Snow, C. E., & Christian, D. (2002). *What teachers need to know about language*. McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Athanases, S. Z., & de Oliveira, L. C. (2008). Advocacy for equity in classrooms and beyond: New teachers' challenges and responses. *The Teachers College Record*, 110(1), 64-104.
- Atwell, N. (1987). *In the middle: Writing, reading, and learning with adolescents*. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.
- Ayres, J., Waldorf, B., & McKendree, M. (2012). *Defining rural Indiana—The first step. (EC-766-W)*. Retrieved from <http://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/EC/EC-766-W.pdf>.
- Batalova, J., & McHugh, M. (2010). Number and growth of students in US schools in need of English instruction. *Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute*.
- Bernstein, B. B. (1990). *Class, codes and control*, Vol. 4: *The structuring of pedagogic discourse*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bernstein, B. B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control, and identity: Theory, research, critique*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Berube, B. (2000). *Managing ESL Programs in Rural and Small Urban Schools*: Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
- Brisk, M. E. (2015). *Engaging students in academic literacies: Genre-based pedagogy for K-5 classrooms*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Calkins, L. M. (1996). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Calkins, L. M. (2001). *The art of teaching reading*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Center on Education Policy (2006). From the capital to the classroom: Year 4 of the No Child Left Behind Act. Retrieved August 23, 2006, from <http://www.cep-dc.org/nclb/Year4/CEP-NCLB-Report-4.pdf>
- Christie, F. (1991). Pedagogical and content registers in a writing lesson. *Linguistics and Education*, 3(3), 203-224.
- Christie, F. (2005). *Classroom discourse analysis: A functional perspective*. London, UK: Continuum.
- Christie, F., & Derewianka, B. (2010). *School discourse: Learning to write across the years of schooling*. New York, NY: Continuum.

- Coady, M., Harper, C., & de Jong, E. (2011). From preservice to practice: Mainstream elementary teacher beliefs of preparation and efficacy with English language learners in the State of Florida. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 34(2), 223-239. doi: 10.1080/15235882.2011.597823
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Cross, R. (2011). Troubling literacy: Monolingual assumptions, multilingual contexts, and language teacher expertise. *Teachers and Teaching*, 17(4), 467-478. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2011.580522
- Cummins, J. (1979). Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters. *Working Papers on Bilingualism Toronto*, 19, 197-202.
- Cummins, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework*, 3-49.
- Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Clevedon, GBR: Multilingual Matters.
- Cummins, J. (2001). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society*. Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education.
- Cummins, J. (2008). BICS and CALP: Empirical and theoretical status of the distinction. In N. H. Hornberger (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 487-499). New York, NY: Springer.
- de Jong, E. J., & Harper, C. A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English-language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32, 101 -124.
- de La Luz Reyes, M. (1992). Challenging venerable assumptions: Literacy instruction for linguistically different students. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62(4), 427-447.
- de Oliveira, L. C. (2010). Enhancing content instruction for English language learners. *Teaching Science With Hispanic ELLs in K-16 Classrooms*, 135.
- de Oliveira, L. C., & Athanases, S. Z. (2007). Graduates' reports of advocating for English language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58(3), 202-215. doi: 10.1177/0022487107299978
- de Oliveira, L. C., & Dodds, K. N. (2010). Beyond general strategies for English language learners: Language dissection in science. *Electronic Journal of Literacy through science*, 9(1).
- de Oliveira, L. C., & Iddings, J. (2014). *Genre pedagogy across the curriculum: Theory and application in U.S. classrooms and contexts*. Bristol, CT: Equinox.
- de Oliveira, L. C., & Silva, T. J. (2013). *L2 writing in secondary classrooms: Student experiences, academic issues, and teacher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Indiana ESL Task Force (2003). *Indiana's English language proficiency standards*. Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Dept. of Education.
- Eggins, S. (1994). *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Eggins, S., & Slade, D. (2005). *Analysing casual conversation*. London, UK: Equinox.
- Enright, K. A. (2013). Adolescent writers and academic trajectories: Situating L2 writing in the content areas. In L. C. de Oliveira & T. Silva (Eds.), *L2 Writing in Secondary Classrooms: Student Experiences, Academic Issues, and Teacher Education* (pp. 27 - 43). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Fillmore, L. W., Snow, C. E., & Educational Resources Information Center (2000). *What teachers need to know about language*. [Washington, DC]: U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Educational Resources Information Center.
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2007). Implementing a schoolwide literacy framework: Improving achievement in an urban elementary school. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(1), 32-43.
- Flynn, K., & Hill, J. (2005). English language learners: A growing population. *Policy Brief: Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning*, 1-12.
- Fu, D. (2009). *Writing between languages: How English language learners make the transition to fluency, grades 4-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fullan, M., & Stiegelbauer, S. M. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gebhard, M., & Harman, R. (2011). Reconsidering genre theory in K-12 schools: A response to school reforms in the United States. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 20(1), 45-55. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2010.12.007
- Gebhard, M., Willett, J., Jimenez, J., & Piedra, A. (2010). Systemic functional linguistics, teachers' professional development, and ELLs' academic literacy practices. In T. Lucas (Ed.), *Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners* (pp. 91-110). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum/Taylor & Francis.
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis theory and method*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Gibbons, P. (2006). *Bridging discourses in the ESL classroom: Students, teachers and researchers*. London, UK: Continuum.
- Gibbons, P. (2009). *English learners, academic literacy, and thinking: Learning in the challenge zone*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gilmetdinova, A. Klassen, M. & Morita-Mullaney, T. (2014). *The (in)flexibility of the NCLB waivers for ELs in rural schools: Indiana administrators in focus*. Presentation at INTESOL, November 15, 2014 in Indianapolis, IN.

- Goldenberg, C., Rueda, R. S., & August, D. (2006). Sociocultural influences on the literacy attainment of language-minority children and youth. In D. A. T. Shanahan (Ed.), *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on language-minority children and youth* (pp. 269-318). Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Got Purple Words? (n.d.). Retrieved October 16, 2015, from <http://www.smekenseducation.com/got-purple-words.html>
- Gottlieb, M. (2006). *Assessing English language learners: Bridges from language proficiency to academic achievement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Gottlieb, M., Cranley, E. M., & Camilleri, A. (2010). *English language proficiency standards and resource guide: Prekindergarten through grade 12*. Madison, WI: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.
- Graves, D. H. (1983). *Writing: Teachers and children at work*. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Graves, D. H. (1994). *A fresh look at writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann
- Gregory, E. (2008). *Learning to read in a new language: Making sense of words and worlds*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gruber, K., Wiley, S., Broughman, S., Stizek, G., & Burian-Fitzgerald, M. (2002). Schools and staffing survey. 1999-2000: Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Hakuta, K., Butler, Y. G., & Witt, D. (2000). How long does it take English learners to attain proficiency? The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute. Policy report 2000-1. *Adolescence*, 40, 503-512.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1989). *Spoken and written language*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2007). *Language and education*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1989). *Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *An introduction to functional grammar*. Baltimore, MD: E. Arnold.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hammond, J., & Gibbons, P. (2005). Putting scaffolding to work: The contribution of scaffolding in articulating ESL education. *Prospect*, 20(1), 6-31.
- Harklau, L., & Pinnow, R. (2009). Adolescent second-language writing. *Handbook of adolescent literacy research*, 126-139.
- Harper, C., & de Jong, E. (2004). Misconceptions about teaching English-Language learners. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 40(2).
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Helman, L. (2012). *Literacy instruction in multilingual classrooms: Engaging English language learners in elementary school*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hirvela, A. (2013). Preparing English Language Learners for Argumentative Writing. In L. C. de Oliveira & T. J. Silva (Eds.), *L2 Writing in secondary classrooms: Student experiences, academic issues, and teacher education* (pp. 67 - 80). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Huang, G. G. (1999). *Sociodemographic changes: Promise and problems for rural education*: Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 425 048.
- Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16(3), 148-164. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2007.07.005
- Hyon, S. (1996). Genre in three traditions: Implications for ESL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(4), 693-722. doi: 10.2307/3587930
- Indiana Department of Education. (2011). *ESEA flexibility waiver application*. Indianapolis, IN.
- Indiana Department of Education. (2014). English Learner and Title III Director's Meeting. Retrieved from [https://learningconnection.doe.in.gov/Library/FilingCabinet/ViewFileDetail.aspx?lfid=74370&et=USER\\_GROUP&eid=317&clid&ret=~/UserGroup/GroupDetailFileBookmarks.aspx?gid%3D317%26ugfid%3D11345](https://learningconnection.doe.in.gov/Library/FilingCabinet/ViewFileDetail.aspx?lfid=74370&et=USER_GROUP&eid=317&clid&ret=~/UserGroup/GroupDetailFileBookmarks.aspx?gid%3D317%26ugfid%3D11345)
- IDOE: Compass. (n.d.). Retrieved October 16, 2015, Retrieved from <http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/overview.aspx>
- Kara-Soteriou, J., & Kaufman, D. (2002). Writing in the elementary school: The missing pieces. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 38(3), 25.
- Kaufman, D. (2002). Living a literate life, revisited. *English Journal*, 91(6), 51-57.
- Kindler, A. L. (2002). Survey of the states' limited English proficient students and available educational programs and services: 2000–2001 summary report. *Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition*, 8.
- King K. V., Zucker S. (2005). *Curriculum narrowing*. San Antonio, TX: Harcourt Assessment.
- Kroll, B. (1990). *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Labbo, L. D., Hoffman, J. V., & Roser, N. L. (1995). Ways to unintentionally make writing difficult. *Language Arts*, 72(3), 164-170. doi: 10.2307/41482627
- Lan, S. W. (2013). Science Classroom Discourse for Fourth Grade English Language Learners' Scientific Literacy Development. *Open Access Dissertations*, (156).
- Larsen, D. (2014). *L2 Writing in elementary school: Challenges for teachers and learners*. Paper presented at 48th Annual TESOL Convention in Portland, OR.
- Lee, J. S., & Oxelson, E. (2006). "It's Not My Job": K-12 teacher attitudes toward students' heritage language maintenance. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 30(2), 453-477.

- Leki, I., Cumming, A. H., & Silva, T. J. (2008). *A synthesis of research on second language writing in English*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lemke, J. L. (1989). *Using language in the classroom*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, USA.
- Lucas, T. (2011). *Teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms a resource for teacher educators*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lucas, T., Villegas, A. M., & Freedson-Gonzalez, M. (2008). Linguistically responsive teacher education preparing classroom teachers to teach english language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(4), 361-373.
- Magrath, C., Ackerman, A., Branch, T., Clinton Bristow, J., Shade, L., & Elliott, J. (2003). *The neglected "R": The need for a writing revolution. The National Commission on Writing*. New York, NY: College Entrance Examination Board.
- Martin, J. R. (2009). Genre and language learning: A social semiotic perspective. *Linguistics and Education*, 20(1), 10-21.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2003). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2008). *Genre relations: Mapping culture*. Oakville, CT: Equinox Pub.
- Matsuda, P. K., & de Pew, K. E. (2002). Early second language writing: An introduction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 11(4), 261-268.
- Meier, D. R. (2011). *Teaching children to write: Constructing meaning and mastering mechanics*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Menken, K., & Antunez, B. (2001). *An Overview of the preparation and certification of teachers working with limited English proficient (LEP) students*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.
- Mercer, N. (2000). *Words and minds: How we use language to think together*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Michaels, S., & Collins, J. (1984). Oral discourse styles: Classroom interaction and the acquisition of literacy. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Coherence in spoken and written discourse* (pp. 219-244). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. London, UK: Sage.
- Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (2009). *Encyclopedia of case study research* (Vol. 1). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mohr, K. A. J. (1998). Teacher talk: A summary analysis of effective teachers' discourse during primary literacy lessons. *The Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 33(2), 16-23. doi: 10.2307/23870557
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2002) *Schools and staffing survey: 1999-2000*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/2002313.pdf>
- National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, (2007). *The growing numbers of limited English proficient students*.
- National Commission on Writing for America's Families. (2004). *Writing: A ticket to work ... or a ticket out: A survey of business leaders*. New York, NY: College Board.

- Ortmeier-Hooper, C. (2013). *The ELL writer: Moving beyond basics in the secondary classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Ortmeier-Hooper, C., & Enright, K. A. (2011). Mapping new territory: Toward an understanding of adolescent L2 writers and writing in US contexts. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 20*(3), 167-181. doi: 10.1016/j.jslw.2011.05.002
- Patthey-Chavez, G. G., Matsumura, L. C., & Valdés, R. (2004). Investigating the process approach to writing instruction in urban middle schools. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 47*(6), 462-476. doi: 10.2307/40018722
- Peregoy, S. F., & Boyle, O. (2005). *Reading, writing, and learning in ESL: A resource book for K-12 teachers*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Pritchard, R. J., & Honeycutt, R. L. (2006). The process approach to writing instruction: Examining its effectiveness. In C. MacArthur, S. Graham & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 275-290). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: A classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly, 19*(2), 229-258. doi: 10.2307/3586828
- Rentner, D. S., Scott, C., Kober, N., Chudowsky, N., Chudowsky, V., Joftus, S., & Zabala, D. (2006). *From the capital to the classroom: Year 4 of the No Child Left Behind Act*.
- Reyes, I., & Moll, L. C. (2008). Bilingual and Biliterate practices at home and school. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics* (pp. 147). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rothery, J. (1994) *Exploring literacy in school english (write it right resources for literacy and learning)*. Sydney, AUS: Metropolitan East Disadvantaged Schools Program.
- Rose, D., & Martin, J. R. (2012). *Learning to write, reading to learn: Genre, knowledge and pedagogy in the Sydney School*. Bristol, CT: Equinox.
- Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, J., & Clewell, M. (2000). *Overlooked & underserved: immigrant students in U.S. secondary schools*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.
- Samway, K. D. (2006). *When English language learners write*: Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Schleppegrell, M. J. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistics perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Schleppegrell, M. J., & de Oliveira, L. C. (2006). An integrated language and content approach for history teachers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 5*(4), 254-268. doi: 10.1016/j.jeap.2006.08.003
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Shurley Instructional Materials: Need Grammar Help?* (n.d.). Retrieved October 16, 2015, from <https://www.shurley.com/>
- Sinclair, J. M., & Coulthard, M. (1975). *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*. London, UK: Oxford Univ Press.
- Spandel, V. (2001). Using traits to support reading processes. In V. Spandel (Ed.), *Creating writers: through 6-trait writing assessment and instruction* (3rd ed., pp. 137-152). New York, NY: Longman.



- Spandel, V. (2005). *Creating writers: through 6-trait writing assessment and instruction*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Tanenbaum, C., Boyle, A., Soga, K., Le Floch, K. C., Golden, L., Petroccia, M., . . . O'Day, J. (2012). National Evaluation of Title III Implementation: Report on State and Local Implementation. *Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, US Department of Education*.
- The Six Traits of Writing. (n.d.). Retrieved October 18, 2015, from <http://www.aianjack.com/the-6-1-writing-traits/>
- Thomas, S., & Vanderhaar, J. (2008). Negotiating resistance to multiculturalism in a teacher education curriculum: A case study. *Teacher Educator, 43*(3), 173-197. doi: 10.1080/08878730802055057
- Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (1997). *School effectiveness for language minority students*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition.
- Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (2002). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement* (pp. 351). Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2000). *Differentiation of instruction in the elementary grades*. ERIC Digest. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 443 572): Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED443572>.
- Top Employers: Cass County, Indiana's technology corridor. (2012, November 1). Retrieved from <http://www.indianatechnologycorridor.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CASS-COUNTY-EMPLOYERS.pdf>
- Tracey, D. H., & Morrow, L. M. (2012). *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.
- Uribe, M., & Nathenson-Mejía, S. (2008). *Literacy essentials for English language learners: successful transitions*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *American FactFinder - Results: Cass County, IN*. Retrieved January 25, 2015, from <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?sr=c=CF>.
- Valdés, G. (2001). *Learning and not learning English: Latino students in American schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Valdés, G., & Castellón, M. (2011). English language learners in American schools. In T. Lucas (Ed.), *Teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms: A resource for teacher educators* (pp. 18 - 34). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Van Sluys, K. (2005). *What if and why?: Literacy invitations for multilingual classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Van Sluys, K. (2011). *Becoming writers in the elementary classroom: Visions and decisions*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental process*: Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Waldorf, B., Ayres, J., & McKendree, M. (2013). *Population trends in rural Indiana*. (ED-767-W). Retrieved from <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/EC/EC-767-W.pdf>.
- WIDA Consortium. (2012). *The English language learner CAN DO booklet*. Madison, WI: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.
- Wiley, T. G. (2005). Second language literacy and biliteracy. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 529-544). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.
- Wright, W. E. (2005). English language learners left behind in Arizona: The nullification of accommodations in the intersection of federal and state policies. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 29(1), 1-29.
- Wright, W. E. (2015). *Beware of the VAM: Valued-Added measures for teacher accountability*. Retrieved October 10, 2015, from <http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/beware-vam-valued-added-measures-teacher-accountability>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Yoesel, M. R. W. (2010). *Mainstreamed English language instruction in a low-incidence rural school district: a case study*. University of Missouri--Columbia.
- Zeichner, K. M. (2009). *Teacher education and the struggle for social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Zhang, S. S. V. (2013). Learning to teach English-Language learners in mainstreamed secondary classrooms. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 26(1), 99-116.

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

## Transcription Conventions

T: Teacher

S: Student

Ss: Multiple Students

Description	Example
Stage Directions [Brackets]	[The teacher starts reading from the overhead projector]
Reading text <i>Italicized</i>	<i>It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...</i>
Emphasized word UPPERCASE	It was the WORST of times, not the BLURST of times...
Rising Intonation ? Question Mark	What day is it today?
Eliciting information ...ellipsis...	Today is... ...Tuesday
Chorally Answering <<double angle brackets>>	<<Tuesday>>
Slight Pause , comma	Today we're going to read this story, and then we'll have lunch
Longer Pause (...) ellipsis within parenthesis	Does anyone have any questions? (...)
No gap, latched utterance = at point of utterance	What's for lunch today = do you know?
Self-Interruption - at point of interruption	It's Salisbury-no, it's just pizza today

VITA

## VITA

As a scholar, I have been fortunate to have been able to call the Midwest home for the past 7 years during my studies for my Master and PhD studies and have been researching educational policy, teachers of English language learners with a focus on Spanish language speaking populations, and pedagogical applications of Systemic Functional Linguistics focusing on the use of the Teaching Learning Cycle in classrooms. Through my dissertation research, I discovered the potential benefit of the use of Systemic Functional Linguistics for discourse analysis, and how this is productive in highlighting the current practices of teachers of English Language Learners specifically regarding teaching writing. Throughout my career as a scholar and teacher in English as a Foreign Language contexts, I have had the opportunity to teach in a number of different places as well as a number of different populations, and look forward to expanding my research to not only English Language Learners in the K-12 context, but to extend this research to English as a Foreign Language settings. I am excited to extend what I have gained from my doctoral program to international contexts, focusing on writing discourse.